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**The Spanish media and the Internet:
new practices built on traditional values**

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Abstract

This research explores the convergence of journalism, an influential and well established profession, and the Internet, a technology that alters the communication experience. It focuses on how the Net and its associated practices intersects with deep rooted journalistic cultures; asking how this collision affects traditional values, how it influences new practices appearing in newsrooms, how the involved agents re-define their roles and how new media logics are emerging from this contact.

This investigation has been developed through the prism of Bourdieu's theory of practice, which considers the journalistic profession as a field, where there are shared values, practices and routines, a sense of a group, a common identity, built on each actor's daily experiences. The latter, accumulated as a bodily *habitus*, operates in relation to the environment. The ethnography, a tool reckoned as well suited to capture and describe behaviours in newsrooms, is the methodology employed in this work, which combines participant observation and interviews. The studied media are four Spanish journalistic institutions; *Diario de Mallorca*, a regional print paper; *Efe*, a news agency, *El País* and *El Mundo*, the two biggest national newspapers and its online sites. This thesis argues that, in the negotiation of their adapted new role, journalists tend to align themselves with their traditional values and *habitus*. Well aware of the Internet-related trends, they claim to keep an open mind to technological features, while filtering them through the sieve of their most cherished tenets.

They see the gatekeeping role of journalism –as a profession with particular values– as something that can help save the public sphere from powerful and biased agents; the identification of sources and traceability of stories to guarantee its trustfulness, framing news in wider scenarios or a declared attachment to 'the truth' –all of these 'news values' and the practical activities designed to underpin them shape their professional ideology. Negotiating new media, and taking a view on journalistic transformation, they mostly stick to what they do not see as nostalgia (an attachment to values now rendered redundant in a new media environment), but as values related with, and indeed helping to enable, democracy, fairness, equality and a healthy public sphere.

Keywords: journalism, online, digital, new media, Bourdieu, Spain, values, practices

Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own independent work, except where otherwise stated. It has not been written or composed by another person and all sources have been appropriately acknowledged by giving explicit references. A detailed list of these references is appended. I further declare that this work has not been previously submitted or accepted in substantially the same form for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

WORK NOT SUBMITTED ELSEWHERE FOR EXAMINATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature:.....

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Chapter I

Introduction

“Without a plausible intention, all the technology in the world would be nothing more than all the technology in the world”

Clay Shirky (2008. p. 18)

i. ANTECEDENTS

In 1995, I was appointed Chief Press Officer of the Balearic Government, one of the seventeen Spanish regions established in 1984 as part of a de-centralised political system that devolved a range of powers over such things as education and health care. As I arrived at my new job, having been a reporter at a local newspaper until 1992, aware of professional uses and practices, I thought that all press releases should only be available online. Having a broad idea of what the Internet was bringing about, aware that anybody could potentially access every website, and preferring to be in direct touch with citizens rather than through mediators who I was perfectly acquainted with, I decided that the Balearic Government should also provide information directly to citizens, establishing a new link with the people. Nevertheless, being cautious, I preserved the, until then, unavoidable relationship with media organisations. I began by replacing faxes with emails and, later, by uploading all press releases onto the Net, available for everybody to read. As I implemented these modifications to old routines, I had a hint of future problems: despite the overwhelming hype in favour of new technologies and modernity, my former colleagues were so reluctant to use their computers that my team had to advise me to revert to the older and familiar facsimile. I did not modify my policy and soon other social agents, public and private, also began employing the Net. By then my plan eventually succeeded. In a few more months my office was offering news and press releases to the general public. We did so for more than three years, a length of time that, following forecasts, should have been enough to get people used to our online site. But when I left my post in 1999, I would not have said that a new channel with citizens had been opened: the Government still depended heavily on traditional media for keeping in touch with the Balearic population, to explain its policies, to be heard. Even now, twelve years later, despite radical improvements to the site, despite offering even audio clips and videos, only a marginal number of citizens directly access the Government website in order to be informed¹. People still massively use traditional media, to find out what is happening in their region and in local politics. For their part, journalists, as I saw in this research, are still in

¹ The Balearic Government site, www.caib.es, is not independently audited. Nevertheless, Alexa, the website that ranks sites, put it in the 1464th place in Spain and 68587th in the world, taking into account all accesses to the website, even the significant number required for non-informative uses. *Diariodemallorca.com*, the website of one of the six regional newspapers is ranked by Alexa in the 873th post in Spain and the 39585th in the world. (Alexa, 2011)

control of most mass communication in the Balearics, even if not as powerfully as they were before. Furthermore, they still claim content to be the most important aspect on journalistic sites.²

Partly due to this experience, I realised that working with the Internet was not just a matter of implementing a technology, or of having access to information or of a few weeks of training; it seemed to require more complex individual and collective involvement. And that meant some time was needed, time for people to accept it, make it theirs, and get used to it. I would not have been able to explain then why the online communication was more complex than just having a wire to be connected to the world, but my failure advised me not to be simplistic about the Net.

Then I went to another job, not related to communication and, despite being fully aware that something important was brewing behind the scenes in the media, I was not in direct touch with it.

A few years later, I began working as a lecturer in Journalism at a Spanish university, and I had again to be informed about the huge changes already happening in the media environment. So huge were they that many experts and academics predicted the end of journalism in the foreseeable future. Even José Luis Martínez Albertos, one of the most prolific and renowned Spanish scholars, an authority for Journalism studies in the country, was claiming that this profession was living on borrowed time, predicting its imminent end. The title of his book, which captures his central idea, could be translated as “Dawn of Journalism” (1997).³

The facts were and still are that print media around the Western world, and television broadcasters at a slower pace, are downsizing their business. The mood around newsrooms is pessimistic. Not only is there a trend towards a more commercial treatment of news, often against basic professional principles, but also towards staff cuts. Fewer people are being informed through traditional news media, on traditional platforms (Compton and Benedetti, 2010, pp. 487-488). In their place there is a confusing emerging panorama: an overwhelming majority of traditional news media have opened their own online sites, where they try to replace their diminishing old business, some successfully, some failing to connect with readers, but none of them

² Pedro Pablo Alonso, editor-in-chief at *Diario de Mallorca*, in a conversation with the author, on January, the 25th, 2010.

³ “El Ocaso del Periodismo”, in Spanish. Translation, mine.

getting enough money from the Net; more social agents are offering information to the general public with mixed fortunes; and lay people can now become journalists themselves by using weblogs or social networks. Everybody claims things are now changing faster than ever, but more than fifteen years after the Net was born, most online news media reckon that they still need more time to adapt, to be familiar with this new technology.⁴

While this bleak future for journalism is being drawn, I do not perceive people visibly reducing their daily diet of news; I would rather say the opposite.⁵ Although the sources of my feeling are not scientific, I should have noticed with friends and acquaintances if they were less interested in news, in what is happening around them, in their communities. But I have not seen a remarkable change or an increase in the number of weblogs offering information to replace traditional media as predicted by some authors (Gillmor, 2004, pp. XXVIII-XXIX). Indeed, I myself, not wishing to be too late starting out on the Net, began a blog four years ago where I had decided to comment on events taking place on the island of Majorca: I left my project a year later after having received just one comment and few subsequent visits.

At first sight, many questions emerge: Where are people sourcing news from? Can amateur citizen journalism replace professional journalism? Are we seeing the emergence of a mix of amateur and professional sites? How are traditional journalistic values adapting to these new situations? Will journalism exist in the future as we know it now? And something more subtle and interesting: in the same way that news on television is very different from that in print papers, in the same way that different patterns of consumption, of access and interpretation, have been tailored for the television since it first appeared, how does online news differ from print and broadcast versions? How are all these elements evolving; how do sources (such as governments or big corporations, for instance) react when confronted with these new media, with new features?

My goals in this research are two:

⁴ Gumersindo Lafuente, online Editor-in-chief of *El País*, in a personal interview with the author, on February, the 7th, 2011.

⁵ Some studies show that traditional media control the distribution of news. In Spain in 2011, a study shows that while more than 50 per cent of people using the Net declare having accessed journalistic media, less than 10 per cent do so with blogs (Estudio General de Medios, 2011, p. 6). Comscore's studies about Europe and the USA are in line (Comscore, 2011a and 2011b). And some scholars detect that most facts on blogs, come from traditional media, while only comments are original. (Reese et al, 2007, p. 249)

(a) First, to examine how journalists, as a social group, with their values, practices, history and social relevance, accept, adapt, make theirs all these changes; how they are managing their transition from one offline model to an online one; and

(b) Second, which new behaviours in the form or genres, practices, attitudes, patterns of work or interactions with sources or audiences, most of them already detected in other places, can be also found and described in Spain; how journalists in this country (I would rather say in this language) manage, interpret, understand and give meaning to these processes.

It must be a real challenge for my former colleagues, who were used to being the only mediators between newsmakers and the general public, to now realise now that their role has to be shared with others and, more humiliating still, often with amateurs, many of them youngsters with no training nor qualifications.

ii. CENTRAL QUESTION

The aforementioned are the issues I am interested in. So, four years ago⁶, somehow still in the dark, I began positing the question that reflected my interests:

How, when, why and by whom are the main social issues selected to be debated, to be underlined in the media, to be offered for debate to the public sphere, for debate? How have the professional practices that we used to see in the traditional media changed with the Internet, the new player, and to what extent?

Now, after my field work has been completed, I can claim that my central question was essentially the correct one, though I added some nuances that I perceived when approaching the situation: how is the new technology affecting journalists, how is it reshaping practices, values, rules of journalism? How do journalists, a group of people with their own culture that some authors call “ideology” (Hanitzsch, 2007, p. 368; Deuze, 2005a, p. 862; 2005b, p. 444), react, adapt, adopt or reject the new technology; what is associated with it, what is behind it? I would further nuance the question with references to the sociological understanding of their role, or how they relate to how they see themselves in this process. In essence, however, it would remain as it is.

Although the present journalistic business crisis creates an unavoidable and inescapable framework (see section 5 ii in Chapter III), I am not focusing on commercial or

⁶ I began designing this research in 2008.

economic questions but on journalism, on how it is evolving, looking for its own identity. A complex process related not only to its traditional values but also with the sociology of technology, with the way human beings with a past and rooted beliefs understand and behave in a changing environment; something that could give me, for instance, a feasible explanation for my failed experiment in 1995.

Journalism seems to be used to adopting new technologies, because it has done so before. Nevertheless, things are now different: the Internet allows other agents, not only trained professionals, to act as journalists, challenging their former exclusive mediating role: a complex characteristic that opens many debates, allows unexpected dynamics to unfold and alters many social positions, not only inside the journalistic field, but in its relationship with other social agents and groups (note how this potentially could affect democracies). The environment could be turned on its head by adding the effect of immediacy, combined with the traditional journalistic value of being the first in telling something new. So, as a starting point, I will analyse what scholars have studied with regards to these phenomena, where the investigations have lead them to, and also the methodological tools used to develop this research to interpret these social dynamics.

Through journalism and its relationship with the Internet, I have been exploring how human beings react when confronted with new technologies, languages and practices, how they behave, individually and collectively, when their social position and their understanding of their environment is put at risk. Journalism is the field – a very rich one, due to the nature of its players – where this phenomenon has been studied, an investigation that in plain terms examines how and why human beings stick to certain routines and practices; and how long does it take for them to modify entrenched behaviours. In the end, my work has taken me to very basic and universal questions that are related to the way we see and understand our world and ourselves in relation to our environment and its changes, evolution, flexibility and rigidity. Pure cultural and sociological anthropology: nothing less than what is innate and what is acquired, what we have learnt consciously and unconsciously, what is agency and what is cultural.

iii. GENERAL FRAMEWORK

There are many studies about these issues, from many different perspectives and disciplines: economists study how the online journalistic business model works – if it

does at all –; political science is concerned with how citizens are informed to take democratic decisions; lawyers analyse how to regulate all these new relationships; historians see which forces are propelling it and, of course, media studies dedicate much effort to those newcomers that challenge journalists, making their voices heard, quite often far from the inner circles of the social system.

There are a handful of researchers (Heinonen, 1999; Domingo, 2006 and 2008b; Boczkowski, 2010; Singer, 2005; Paterson, 2008; Steensen, 2010a; Robinson, 2009; Anderson, 2011c; Usher, 2012) that treat online journalism mostly as a socially constructed medium, that sees the adoption of the Net being dependent on collective decisions, taken by social players, such as journalists, users or readers, depending on a range of different reasons, most of them not linked to technology. I share many of their principles and this research follows their line of work, albeit with some special characteristics related to the sociological methods employed to frame journalistic practices within a broader picture. I want to stress that these agents are not absolutely free in adapting their behaviour to new environments: they somehow tend to follow past practices deeply rooted. In a nutshell, my approach will give more relevance to the role of human agency as well as technology as an agent having its say in the social construction of this new journalism.

In Chapter III I will explain in more detail the present thesis' foundations but it is now convenient to underline the fact that in this research I am aiming at building an image of these changes that does not depart from a macro-perspective, from a general view, but from a micro-analysis, a detailed and heuristic view, an explanation of how and why these changes and new relationships are being shaped, to then construct the vision. From the very beginning, this is not a work that uses statistics, but interpretations, and from this very close vision, speculates how things may evolve. This research wants to draw a detailed narrative of what journalists are doing in their daily professional lives to adopt the new technology; and how they negotiate these new routines with their beliefs, their rooted principles; how they see the implosion of a medium when some predicate that journalism is no more a decisive agent. These are the central characteristics of this investigation, which will be explained later on.

My research was developed in Spain, a relatively understudied environment, where the Net has changed the media scenario in a particular way. I researched different levels of

engagements with the Net, from a regional traditional newspaper to a global news agency, from the leading Spanish print paper to the leading online medium. I used four different situations that gave me different and valuable perspectives about the adoption of the Net. This work focuses on the ways in which online journalism is still evolving now, in 2011/12, after fifteen years of experiments, trials and errors, studies and strategies. I analysed these phenomena from the perspective of journalism (or the sociology of news production school) but also from the sociology of technology angle, as far as this adoption relates to a broader reality. I approached journalism from the general framework of Pierre Bourdieu's sociological theory, which posits a particular understanding of social relations and their analysis.

iv. STRUCTURE

In **Chapter II** I describe the state of the research on the Internet, media and online journalism, where this study fits. Why journalism has been considered to be a key institution in a democratic political system; how the adoption of the new medium has been developing since its arrival; how scholars have studied the contact of technology with social human activities such as journalism and what are the main journalistic debates about the introduction of the Net around the world as well as in Spain.

In **Chapter III**, I describe the research methodologies employed in this work. Also I will introduce the sociological theoretical framework that I will employ to decipher and give sense to the journalistic experiences that I detected in my field work. Finally, I explain why I have chosen these four media institutions for my research.

In **Chapters IV to VII** I explain my findings in each of the four newsrooms. This work includes a traditional newspaper, *Diario de Mallorca*; the biggest Spanish news agency, *Efe*; and the two biggest Spanish print media: *El País*, the best-selling newspaper and the second largest online site; and *El Mundo*, the second best-selling print newspaper and the first news site.

And finally, in **Chapter VIII**, I summarise the conclusions, look at the implications of my findings and point at the areas where more work is needed.

Chapter II

Review of the literature

The main debates about journalism and its new online version

“If something new is not simply more recent, but also something which has not been properly digested, tamed or domesticated, both in conceptual and practical terms, then newness has to do with historically situated comparisons and distinctions.”

Fernando Bermejo (2009, p. 134)

1. JOURNALISM

This is an investigation into how the profession of journalism meets a new technology and what has been unfolding as a result of this. First I have to determine what I understand by journalism, its importance, and its traditional values. Then I will study the Internet and its nature, to finish analysing the new relationship between the old profession and the new technology.

i. DEFINITION

Evidently the newspaper is an institution that is not yet fully understood. What it is, or seems to be, for anyone of us at any time is determined by our differing points of view. As a matter of fact we do not know much about the newspaper. It has never been studied (Park, 1923, p. 276).

Robert Park, sociologist at the Chicago School, considered to be one of the founders of mass communication studies, writing in 1923 about journalism – which was then synonymous with the print press – said that it had not yet been analysed (1923, p. 276). Almost a century later, journalism has been widely studied and our knowledge about it is much more complex.

Barbie Zelizer, in her book *Taking Journalism Seriously* (2004, pp. 13-44), needs more than thirty pages to clarify the core concept alone. She says that depending on the interpretive community one uses as a foundation, journalism could be seen as a profession or as people, as a set of practices or as an institution. It can be seen from the point of view of scholars, the general public, social agents or from the journalistic community, and each of them will see it from different perspectives.

For the purpose of this research, I consider journalism as an institution made up of professionals as well as a set of practices; born and formed in relation to social and historical developments, evolving along with the societies in which it is embedded, that consists of gathering, preparing and distributing news and related commentaries and texts through mass media, traditionally in newspapers and more recently also in audiovisual or electronic platforms or a combination of both, with a set of shared beliefs that some authors have called an “ideology” (Hanitzsch, 2007, pp. 366-368; Deuze, 2005b, p. 444).

It must be stressed that journalism is usually a collective task, born to fulfill a social need (Domingo et al, 2008, p. 329), formed around a physical place, the newsroom, a

sort of temple for its activity, where the social phenomenon of sharing values takes place, something studied in-depth in the 1970's and 1980's (Warner, 1970 and 1971; Tuchman 1974 and 1978; Schlesinger, 1987, for instance). This particular environment is key because it is where the Internet is nowadays being adopted.

My understanding of journalism connects with Park's when he says that the newspaper “is the outcome of an historic process in which many individuals participated without foreseeing what the ultimate product of their labors was to be” (1923, p. 273) or, in modern times, with Ari Heinonen's, when he does not “see journalism as something that has always been the same, never mind that *it should always remain the same*” (my italics). For him, “journalism is a social phenomenon” (1999, p. 11) based upon certain developments, including the technological ones, opening doors to new forms of expressing those values.

Journalism seems intimately attached to certain values and practices. Thomas Hanitzsch (2007) recently made a summary of this “particular set of ideas and practices by which journalists, consciously and unconsciously, legitimate their role in society”, the result of surveys carried out around the world (pp. 367-369). He identifies a shared vision of (a) their social role, (b) the understanding of their profession (epistemologies)⁷, and (c) a specific ethical ideology which translates into seven dimensions that could also be called values:

- an interventionist attitude in relation to topicality, opposed to a passive one;
- the necessity of being far from, and even against power (also ratified by Cassidy, 2005, p. 266); a dimension interpreted by Deuze as the professional necessity of being autonomous, independent from other powers, in order to fulfill its social commitment (Deuze, 2005b, p. 447).
- submission to market rules in content production;
- a commitment to objectivism, with a set of rules that describes what is formally understood as objective – a value largely studied since Tuchman (1972), sometimes seen as a ritual (Karlsson, 2010, pp. 535-536), as a strategy (Lau, 2004, p. 702) or as a formality (Broersma, 2010, p. 27).⁸

⁷ Ekström explains that this in turn links with the ritualistic importance of news in our society, “a belief in the news” as a social value (Ekström, 2002, p. 270), that confers a special status, some sort of social mission, to this profession.

⁸ Broersma says that “[t]o enforce its claim on truth and overcome its limitations, journalism has developed discursive strategies to make stories as persuasive as possible” (Broersma, 2010, p. 27),

- empiricism in the research of truth, as opposed to speculation;
- evaluation of context,
- a special concern of achieving the truth (Hanitzsch, 2007, pp. 367-368).⁹

There are other journalistic values, less universally accepted than those described by Hanitzsch, which, occasionally, can be important: it is the case of originality of news (Keeble, 1994, p. 56; Downie and Schudson, 2009, n.p.), relevant for this research due to its relation to blogs and social networks, and with the mimicking effect of online journalistic media.¹⁰

This journalistic ideology has been mostly shaped by the print press, which many scholars consider to have remained rather static for the last century or so (Gans, 2004/1979, pp. XVI-XVII; Westerstål & Johansson, 1986, p. 140), setting what could be seen as an internal reference. Meyer talks of a “steady state”:

For most of this century [the XXth], the newspaper business changed so slowly that at any given moment it appeared to its participants to be in a steady state. [...] [T]he skills needed to produce the editorial product did not change, and the ideal journalism professor was a craftsperson who could share skills honed on the job with young people who would enter the same kind of world the professor had left. (Meyer, 1996, n.p.)

Domingo et al., among others, say that “the working routines and values of journalistic culture had remained highly stable for almost a century” (2008, p. 326). In general, journalists seem attached to these *de facto* rules (Usher, 2010).

These ideologies must be seen as normative, but are not always rigorously followed by practitioners; who are often tempted by shortcuts that deviate from the rule. For the purpose of this investigation, what is important is that those values were perceived as a solid component of the profession and due to that stability journalists may have deduced that this particular form of journalism was the only one that could endure for ever. This way of doing journalism is the one that has had to confront the arrival of the Net and its

with a language and rules that “ensure the effect of authenticity and truthfulness” (2010, p. 27). In this sense, “objectivity requires only that journalists be accountable for *how* they report, no *what* they report (Ted Glasser, cited by Goldstein, 2007, p. 67)

⁹ Many other scholars studied the matter with roughly similar conclusions: Mark Deuze (2005b) summarises in five points this journalistic “ideology”: a sense of public service, objectivity, autonomy, immediacy and ethics (2005b, pp. 445-447). See also Hallin (1992); Kovach and Rosenstiel, (2001); Reese, (1990); Soloski, (1990); Golding and Elliot, (1979), or Merritt, (1995); cited by Deuze (2005b).

¹⁰ The newsworthiness criteria are normally considered journalistic values. One of them which became controversial when weblogs emerged was originality of content. (Singer, 2003, p. 149)

consequences.

ii. ITS SOCIAL PLACE

When a profession is considered to be synonymous with democracy (Carey, 1997/1969, p. 332) or “the most powerful knowledge-producing institution” (Ekström, 2002, p. 259) its crisis will be felt much more worryingly than just the collapse of another business. News media were described as very influential, even at the first stages of their development, back in the XVI and XVII centuries.¹¹ James Curran says nothing less than that “modern media assumed the role of the church, in a more secular age, of interpreting and making sense of the world to the mass public” (2002, p. 77). Curran states that liberal historians saw the emergence of modern media as a key step in a process of building democratic societies, linking the health of politics with the quality of news media as mediators. “The process of democratization was enormously strengthened by the development of modern mass media” (Curran, 2002, pp. 4-5), and even, in the XVIIIth century “the press and the expanding culture of print, contributed to the unification of Britain [...] and played a significant part in renewing elite authority in the 1790's” (p. 47). By then, the identification between the media (print papers) and journalism was absolute: journalism was what was done in a *journal* (Zelizer, 2004, p. 21). It was the first historical definition of journalism: the act of publishing a letter, a newspaper, a journal, in which journalism and medium were difficult to separate (Schudson, 2001, p. 153; McNair, 2005, p. 36).

Later, around the mid Nineteenth century, in what Carey considers a revolution, the figure of the 'professional communicator' emerges, who was in charge of assembling the pieces that form a journal (1997/1969, pp. 132-133)¹², a figure that will eventually become 'the trained journalist'. “The domination of news dissemination by the press services, and the creation of primitive electronic forms of communication” strengthens newspapers, now seen as responsible for the centralisation of power and thus fortifying nations and controlling centrifugal minorities, by nationalising them (p. 129).

¹¹ Mass communication studies were historically mostly restricted and focused in a handful of developed countries, basically the United States and United Kingdom (Curran and Park, 2000, p. 2) and more recently other European areas.

¹² Also in Germany, where the journalistic and newsroom culture and tradition are quite different from the rest of Europe and America, Jrgen Wilke (2003, p. 466-468) finds a figure that could be assimilated to an editor as early as 1731, similar to Carey's professional communicator.

Carey and Curran rivet what Benedict Anderson claimed about the involvement of news media in the shaping of modern nations, those “imagined communities”:

[n]othing perhaps more precipitated [the search for elements of linking fraternity], nor made it more fruitful, than print-capitalism, which made it possible for rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and to relate to others, in profoundly new ways” (1993, p. 36).

As a result of such crucial a role, journalists enjoyed a high social status and lived in what was called a “golden age”, a time when its social influence was important, politics was under its scrutiny and they were powerful and respected. Blumler and Kavanagh (1999, pp. 211-212), from the field of political communication, describe this “golden age” as taking place from the end of the II World War to the 1960's, when political communication was based on political parties. Herbert Gans, who studied journalism in the 1970's, writing thirty years later, said that:

The journalists themselves were believed [in those days] to be freer from competitive pressures and interferences from politicians and advertisers. In addition, they were perceived as possessing more influence and prestige in their firms (then all headed by journalists) and with politicians and the nation. Needless to say [...] they were living through a golden age (2004, p.xv).

Somehow, this rather stable professional profile still underlies what most journalists, especially those whose formation took place few decades ago, consider to be their social function.

It is important to mention here Jürgen Habermas' concept of the 'public sphere'. The German philosopher developed a theory about society that gave the journalism and the media a remarkable role, as part of what he called the 'public sphere', a term that will appear many times in this thesis. Habermas describes this sphere as “a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed” (Habermas, 1974; p. 49), where ideas are formulated and confront one another in debates, where deliberation takes place. This 'public sphere' runs parallel to the state and in this sense it needs to be a free environment, one that reflects everybody's thoughts. It should be permeable and able to arrive at agreements through deliberation. The role of journalism is key for the 'public sphere': the latter is fed by it. As a result, journalism has a great

social responsibility.

iii. A 'SOCIAL BUSINESS'

Towards the end of the Twentieth century, the journalistic profession came increasingly under question. One of the main criticisms arises from the fact that, while having the altruistic social and political function of conveying information from sources to readers, journalism must be financed with commercial sales, where profits are paramount. In practice, this translates into more attractive contents, more focus in presentation – more colour, simpler prisms – than in the real value of information. James B. McPherson, in his history of American journalism¹³, describes how print media evolved towards a more visual approach:

some newspapers began to experiment more with colour and graphic elements even before the 1983 arrival of *USA Today*. The format changes reflected a trend towards entertainment, especially visual entertainment, in all sorts of news media (2006, p. 82).

Competition from radio and television, mostly in the second part of the last century, exacerbated this trend. Sound revealed its power as a political mediator since William Taft, as early as 1908, recorded and successfully delivered his electoral messages for farmers in the US. From the 1920's onwards, this sound could be broadcast, and became a powerful political weapon that was in its cumbersome stage in the period leading to the II World War (Crook, 1998, pp. 77-81). Blumler and Kavanagh point to the emergence of television, around 1960, in order to explain a change in the type of language employed to get in touch with audiences. The television enlarged the numbers of audience, incorporated new languages “with more intimate styles of address” and, as a result, politicians adopted

an array of tactics to get into the news, shape the media agenda, and project a preplanned line in press conferences [...]. From this development, the core features of the professional model of modern campaigning emerged [...]. Campaign themes had to be pretested, and politicians were discouraged from “speaking their minds” directly to the

¹³ The United States have generally been the place where new journalistic trends were tested to be later transplanted to other latitudes with no or minor variations. This was fuelled by the idea that the underdeveloped world should imitate the States and because there was an imperialistic imperative (Curran and Park, 2000, pp. 3-4).

public [...]. When many citizens had become more open minded and flexible [...] they were served an emptier and less nourishing communications diet. (1999, p. 213)

W. Lance Bennet notes that news media were not only agents for the business world, but multinational corporations themselves, where profits are their first priority (2003, p. 1). In Spain, Núria Almirón (2005, n.p.) describes how the most important journalistic group, PRISA¹⁴, in a phenomenon that she in Spanish calls “financiarización”¹⁵, decided to operate under the pressure of strict profits targets. Dahlgren remarks that a market driven by conglomerate media industries had to clash with journalistic values (2005, p. 150). Curran, while demanding action against this trend, does not rule out a public service media system, be it private or public, to be a counterweight to news media concentrated in huge multinational corporations that have shaped a market which “is not genuinely open for all and which tends to be controlled by right-wing leadership” (2002, pp. 229-230). Following this line of thought, Gerard Hauser, James Aune, Michael Huspek and James Bohman (Huspek, 2007, p. 331) call for a state regulation in order to develop media publications with a greater sensitivity to local people’s vernacular voices. Recently, a sceptical Jürgen Habermas remarked that journalism nowadays can work as a mediator in a democracy “only if a self-regulating media system gains independence from its social environments” (2006, pp. 411-412). Justin Lewis (2006, p. 304) suggests that a deeper and more correct understanding of the profession is the centre of the problem.

[...] While the system is responsive to demand, those demands come not just from audiences but advertisers (hence the demise of newspapers with large audiences but insufficient advertising revenue), and are subject to measures of profitability which may work against the notion of public interest or investigative journalism (2006, p. 308).

For Lewis, this situation is in part due to the structure of news producing systems, which are top-down, as a matter of fact proposing a bigger role for readers and for interactivity, something that now is possible, thanks to the Net. This very mercantile approach to news means that the more powerful get overrepresented at the same time that wide segments of the society are excluded. As Kevin Howley states,

¹⁴ PRISA is the owner of *El País*, one news medium studied in this thesis (see Chapter VI).

¹⁵ “Financiarización” could be translated as a process characterised by the introduction the logic of ‘casino’ finances in an ordinary company.

[a]s media consolidation proceeds virtually unchecked and the practice of journalism increasingly comes to resemble that of the public relations industry, there is a pronounced lack of diversity of opinion and perspective in news, information, and public affairs reporting – a poverty of voices. (2003, p. 275)

iv. INTERNAL CRITICISM

By the end of the Twentieth century, criticism of how journalism has been performing its mediating role soared to the point that eventually some voices emerged from inside the profession demanding a revaluation. “The critique has not only persisted but has evolved from among the ranks of the journalists themselves” (Petersen, 2003, p. 251). In America, as a response to this climate, the *Civic Journalism* movement (Nip, 2008) – also known as *Public Journalism* – which emerged in the early 1990's, was concerned mostly with addressing social participation in the media. “Rather than serving as dispassionate observers, the civic journalists became actively involved in their communities” (McPherson, 2006, p. 133). It was really relevant for many years, not only in print media, but also in television. But “though many news organisations changed their focus and methods [following this movement], civic journalism drew at least as many critics as converts among the working press. [...] Some editors said they did not need polls to tell them what readers wanted” (2006, p. 134). This professional attitude will be found again, in other guises, in relation to the interaction capability that the Internet enables.

Although with its own particularities, across Europe, the feeling was similar. In 1993, the Council of Europe approved the resolution 1003, demanding the introduction of ethical rules in European media, fixing a list of recommended journalistic practices, as a sign of an increasing concern (Council of Europe, 1993).¹⁶ The fact that in 1995 most (20) of the 31 ethical codes regulating press activities in Europe had been developed in the previous five years meant a very recent response to a worrying trend in journalism (Laitila, 1995, p. 529-530). But, in the end, they did not change much.

¹⁶ Three points in this resolution should be stressed: first, it says that “[i]n addition to the legal rights and obligations set forth in the relevant legal norms, the media have an ethical responsibility towards citizens and society which must be underlined *at the present time*”; second: “[n]ews organisations must consider themselves as special socio-economic agencies whose entrepreneurial objectives have to be limited by the conditions for providing access to a fundamental right”; and third: “journalism should not alter truthful, impartial information or honest opinions, or exploit them for media purposes, in an attempt to create or shape public opinion” (Council of Europe, 1993).

2. THE INTERNET

This section is concerned with what the Internet, a new technology, means for journalism. First, I will analyse the Internet itself; I will then move onto what its implications for the profession are, especially those that scholars have already detected to be established as new practices, whose origin lies at the convergence of the two: Internet and journalism.

i. NEW TECHNOLOGY, ONTOLOGICAL CHANGES

For authors such as Van Loon (2008, pp. 2-3), mass communication studies traditionally focused on three elements: (a) the sender – how, why and in what context this agent creates messages –; (b) the messages – what is said in them and what their overall effect is – and (c) the receiver – how those messages were interpreted. Remarkably, the element in the middle, the medium or mediator through whom context, content and effect are linked; is often treated as a *black box*, which is in itself ignored.¹⁷ So pervasive is its presence that even now, in my field work, most online journalists I interviewed were more concerned about their production and the implications of its content, what audiences understand and how competitors play than by the technology itself. In spite of what has just been said, most conflicts concerning online journalism are triggered by this mediating technology, the *black box* and the processes that originate because of it. This is not to be overlooked, given that these processes have an undeniable impact on the way agents perceive, value and interpret the experience of communication.

As far as mass media require technology, journalism is indeed acquainted with it, from the telegraph to the Internet (Winston, 1998). The only remarkable difference is that new developments have nowadays sped up, and our applied technologies have multiplied. The “diffusion of technology endlessly amplifies the power of technology. [...] New information technologies are not simply tools to be applied, but processes to be developed”, says Manuel Castells (2010/1996, p. 31). We needed centuries to produce a printed book, a few more centuries for the telegraph, after that the radio came

¹⁷ The *black box* is an “engineering practice, a way of abbreviating complex technical processes so that the work of design can proceed” (Winner, 1993, footnote 2 in p. 377). See also Latour (1987, pp. 2-3), who employs the word as coming from “cyberneticians”, used whenever a piece of machinery or a set of commands is too complex.

in decades, the television in less time; while recently the mobile phone and the Internet barely needed a decade to become a familiar tool (Thierer, 2005, p. 32).

Marshall McLuhan (1964) left a remarkable imprint in the history of media communication, with his famous slogan “the medium is the message”, which suggests that the very nature of the mediator, of the technological artifact, had the power to affect the entire experience of communication.

From McLuhan onwards, different schools of thought have taken processes of adoption as a topic of research, not only from a journalistic perspective, but also in wider terms. Initially, it was claimed that a user was “the powerless victim of technological domination” (Bakardjieva, 2005, p. 9)¹⁸; that the “technological development [was] autonomous with respect to society; [that] it shape[d the] society, but [was] not reciprocally influenced” (Mackay and Gillespie, 1992, p. 686). It was a vision understandably called “technological determinism”. As happens more often than not, a more nuanced interpretation emerged as a reaction to this vision, considering users as “active contributor[s] to the shaping of technology” (Bakardjieva, 2005, p. 9), a line of thought that accepts not only a place for human agency, but that “as a vitally important part of 'progress', technological change is a key aspect of what our societies need actively to shape, rather than passively to respond to” (MacKenzie and Wajcman, 1999, p. 6). “All artefacts exhibit interpretative flexibility”. (1999, p. 9)

For MacKenzie and Wajcman, technology should not be seen as “outside of society, as some versions of technological determinism would have it, but as inextricably part of society” (1999, p. 12). Taking from Strum's field observation of baboons' lives, these scholars defend the idea that “to talk of 'social relations' as if they were independent of technology is therefore incorrect [...] things humans have made are involved in most of the ways human beings relate to each other” (1999, p. 23). So, technological artefacts, they say, should be studied in the same way as new actors, while human beings are still the key agents, those who shape and give meaning to these elements. In this sense, it was a logical consequence that there were many studies about how the adoption and domestication of technologies take place. They mostly developed around the home (Silverstone, 1994; Moores, 1993 and 1996; Haddon, 1991 and 1992; Bakardjieva, 2005), where individuals got used to and appropriated most mass consuming

¹⁸ Most studies in this field were developed towards the end of the last century.

technologies.

All this relates to what takes place in newsrooms, where journalists experience new forms of communication such as the Internet. At this point, and with the objective of my research in mind, it will be useful to recall Roger Silverstone's approach to the influence of new technologies specifically on news media. For him, the “symbolic and functional characteristics [or technologies] claim a place in both institutional and individual practice, but also, as media, conveying through the whole range of their communication the values, rules and rhetorics their centrality for the conduct of the quotidian” (2005, p. 200). Silverstone remarks that the new functions and effects of the Net on journalism, have moral implications – the idea of otherness, that is relevant when reading media texts –, imply changes in the notion of proximity, differences in the fact that what was once strange has become familiar and what was familiar strange, etcetera. In this range of alterations to the reader's relationship with their environment, Silverstone stresses that interactivity, a functionality that has become very controversial among journalists,

raises the question of the moral status of those who communicate with each other, and of the ethical status of the kind of communications that are generated on-line (2005, p. 201).

Silverstone concludes by saying that

[a]s the borders between real and imagined worlds, between self and other, and between the analysis of, and participation in, media culture become increasingly problematic, both the substantive and methodological challenges posed by the presence of media and communication technologies and systems in contemporary society quickly outrun an otherwise containing and comforting agenda (2005, pp. 201-202).

Somehow relating to Silverstone's concern for how the sense of otherness may be affected, Vincent Miller describes what the new technologies promote, impose, even as a phatic culture. He says that

[w]e are seeing how in many ways the Internet has become as much about interaction with others as it has about accessing information. [...] In the drift from blogging, to social networking, to microblogging we see a shift from dialogue and communication between actors [...], to a situation where the maintenance of a network itself has become the primary focus. (2008, p. 398)

What happens when a social group adopt a new technology has been studied from other perspectives: Neil Postman, Jacques Ellul, Eric Havelock and Susanne Langer coined the term “media ecology”, claiming that “a medium is a technology within which a culture grows, [giving] form to a culture's politics, social organization and habitual ways of thinking”, a concept that applies fully to newsrooms. (Postman, 2000, p. 10) “Media environments specify what we can do and what we cannot [...]. Media ecology tries to find out what roles media force us to play, how media structure what we are seeing or thinking [...]” (Scolari, 2012, p. 205). For them, each technology could be seen as a framework, an environment where a certain internal logic could be found, influencing the message, the interaction and thus, the culture. Postman, when opening the Inaugural Media Ecology Association Convention, explained that

“[w]e put the word 'media' in front of the word 'ecology' to suggest that we were not simply interested in media, but in the ways in which the interaction between media and human beings give a culture its character [...] and [...] help a culture to maintain symbolic balance” (Postman, 2000, pp. 10-11).

Needless to say, the idea of media ecology, which has been relaunched since the Internet appeared in the second half of the Nineties, will be a reference in this research.

I now turn to more typical journalistic research. Applying ethnographies as a methodology, newsrooms are used as in-depth studies, looking to describe the group's social ethos (Breed, 1955; Tuchman, 1978, Fishman 1983; Sigal, 1973; Meltzer, 2009; Molotch and Lester, 1974; Robinson, 2009; Bourdieu, 1996¹⁹); recently the irruption of the Internet has become part of this analysis, so we already have some interpretations for this encounter between journalism and the Internet. For most journalists, this can be read as a transition from a print “media ecology” to an online one.

Firstly, even from before the Internet's arrival, there were the unavoidable deterministic approaches, predicting huge and sometimes fantastic changes in journalism. Most of these “utopias”, as Domingo (2006 pp. 54-92) called them, are yet to become a reality. They go from Pavlik's (1999, p. 55) announcement that journalism would become a profession based on dictation, due the new technologies that would allow the voice to be read in a way that never happened before, or his “omnidirectional video news [that] will

¹⁹ Bourdieu's work applies his theories to the journalistic environment, but does not explore any newsroom.

enable viewers to navigate by panning, tilting or zooming” (1999, p. 56) or, later, the huge changes based on the usage of hypertext (2001); to Dahlgren's (1996, p. 67), who saw that “suddenly [with the Net] [...] investigative journalism becomes economically viable for many more media organizations”, to Gillmor's (2004), who foresaw a democratisation of the condition of journalist – everybody could act as one –, thanks to the interactivity function of the Net.

On the other hand, David Domingo (2006), who researched four online journalistic newsrooms in Spain, defends the opposite position, stating that, despite these “utopias”, online journalism is constructed locally, in a specific place, using the available resources, and “mainly the weight of traditional journalistic culture, are the key factors that shape online journalism routines and values” (2006, p. 506). Domingo adds that “the tradition of a media company [...] is the main factor that determines the use of the Internet as a news medium” (2006, p. 506). In sum, there is no relevant place for technology. His line of thought is popular in journalistic studies: recently, Jane Singer and a number of international researchers published a book called *Participatory Journalism* (2011), where they studied how contributions from outside the newsroom reach the online media but, in general, Singer did not focus on the mediator as a factor to define how the new journalism is being shaped. The conclusions of these studies are in line with what I have seen in my field work: journalists I spoke to suggest that journalism is still as it used to be, with slight changes affecting speed, and a higher and reluctantly accepted participation of readers. In its very essence it seems to have remained the same.

Pablo Boczkowski, who also has studied the adoption of the Internet in many journalistic newsrooms²⁰ at different stages and environments, posits that these are “[p]rocesses of mutual shaping in the evolution of online newspapers” (1999, p. 116), meaning by that a “mutual shaping of technologies and consumers” (1999, p. 115). Later he adds that

the interweaving of technology and society is an on-going process. Hence, the shaping of an artifact does not stop after the emergence of a dominant design, and the conditions for the cultural consequences of its use start being created long before its initial deployment. Moreover, in this continuous process, partial outcomes at an earlier stage influence

²⁰ *New York Times*, *Clarín*, *La Nación* or *Houston Chronicle*.

events at a later phase (2004b, p. 10).

ii. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NEW MEDIUM

What comes next is the analysis of the most remarkable characteristics associated with the Net that affect journalism.²¹

(a) Hypertextuality. This is the option of offering information about information; it is a point on the screen (a word, an image, a headline) that sends readers to a related site, wherever the producer wants, on the World Wide Web. In Steensen's words, it "is generally understood as a computer-based non-linear group of texts [...] that are linked together with hyperlinks" (2010a, p. 3). It allows alternative readings; access to new sources and a sense of openness to other sources that somehow pushes users to generate their own model of preferences, personalising what they see. It allows online journalism to supply

original news content with, for example, hyperlinks to original documents such as press releases and annotated reference material which could include links to the pros and cons in the issue at hand, links to other sites with information and a selection of material in news archives (Bardoel and Deuze, 2001, n.p.).

(b) Immediacy. This is quite an obvious characteristic of online journalism which is not stressed by all scholars.²² It means that information can be published or updated in real time, at any moment. It is what most users consider the first reason to look for online news (Nguyen, 2010, p. 229). Some authors have found cultural changes associated with it (Boczkowski, 2010); it implies permanent deadlines and constant updates, usually opposed to the traditional news culture, based on a unique final outcome (Thurman and Myllylahti, 2009, p. 701).

(c) Multimediality. It usually has two different meanings: the first (the one I

²¹ There are different classifications of these Internet features: while Bardoel and Deuze (2001) mention customization, hyperlinking, convergence, and interactivity, Steensen (2010a, pp. 2-3) says that all features could be grouped in three: hypertextuality (including customization); interactivity (including immediacy) and multimediality. My classification also takes into account what I have seen in practice.

²² Despite the fact that immediacy seems to be an important feature of online journalism, it has not been always stressed as such: the journalistic glossary "Key Concepts in Journalism Studies", that records 238 different terms, does not find a place for it (Franklin et al. 2005). Steensen says that "[t]he techno-approach to research on online journalism has been dominated by investigations of the three assets of new technology that are generally considered to have the greatest potential impact on online journalism: hypertext, interactivity and multimedia" (2010a, p. 2).

adhere to) is what Deuze defines as

the presentation of a news story package on a website using two or more media formats, such as (but not limited to) spoken and written word, music, moving and still images, graphic animations, including interactive and hypertextual elements (2004, p. 140).

The second version applies not to online formats, but to platforms: multimedia would be the content delivered in more than one platform, be it print, radio or television broadcast, or the Internet (2004, p. 140).

(d) Interactivity. It is a purely audience-related feature that adopts different formats. It has to do “with the fact that online news has the potential to make the reader/user part of the news experience” (Bardoel and Deuze, 2001) in one way or another.

Although these are the most repeated characteristics that have been remarked upon by scholars researching news media, there are other features that could also be relevant. Some are related to what Silverstone (2005, pp. 200-204) mentioned in relation to the idea of otherness, space and time, and their symbolic connotations. For instance, the anonymity of electronic interlocutors (Boczkowski, 1999, pp. 102-104); the limitless availability of space on the Net, in comparison with print media, which allows news media to give more information, especially for niche market segments (Thurman and Myllylahti, 2009, p. 702) and reduces the selectivity of news, increasing last minute news (Barnhurst, 2010, p. 562); the online culture of simulation (Miller, 2001, pp. 253-279) and the shallowness of communication online where contact matters more than content (Dean, 2010, p. 35).

All these features associated with the technology, the medium, link with the power that McLuhan (1964) conceded to technology and to what his followers described later as the “media ecology” (Postman, 2000). Or with the media logic that Altheide (1976, 1984, 1997, 2004) mentioned about more traditional media: what makes an internal logic, an ecology, a set of relations that influence what is said through this channel. Something that is really present in every newsroom, as an unknown new environment where journalists are discovering path-breaking features as they approach and practice the novel technique.

3. THE SHAPING OF A NEW JOURNALISM

I will analyse now how the Net arrived at the newspapers in the second part of the Nineties, the expectations arisen, and what the dominant approach was.

i. EXPECTATIONS FROM THE NET

After the telegraph, the photography, the telephone, the radio and television broadcasting, and more recently cable and satellite television²³ among other technologies, it was the turn for the Internet to alter journalism. Vincent Mosco (2004, p. 1) certifies that “in the late 1990s [...] all the wonders that were forecast for the telegraph, electricity, the telephone, and broadcasting were invested in the computer” and a true myth (about this modern technique) was built. From the late Seventies, tales stating that the world was in the threshold of a big change (Poor, 2006, pp. 41-42), with a revolutionary technology, flexible, cheap and able to generate incredible transformations (Shapiro, 1999, pp. 14-18) were rife.

The "magic" of the Internet is that it is a technology that puts cultural acts, symbolizations in all forms, in the hands of all participants; it radically decentralizes the positions of speech, publishing, filmmaking, radio and television broadcasting, in short, the apparatuses of cultural production (Poster, 1997, p. 267).

The expectations from the business side of this technology were again hyperbolic. The rush to be present on the Net, the forecasts about how people would buy in the future were so exaggerated that they created a big economic bubble that translated into a number of traumatic crashes at the beginning of the 21st century (Scott, 2005, pp. 96-

²³ The telegraph, developed by Morse in 1835 (Fellow, 2005, p. 238), was operated by himself in 1940 (Adler and Rodman, 1991, p. 6), although there are more claimants to the honour of this invention (Winston, 1998, p. 24); in 1876, Alexander Bell, competing with Elisha Gray, filed the patent for the telephone, which was first operated in 1878 (Fellow, 2005, p. 240); in 1839, Louis Daguerre and Josep Niepce invented photography, in France; since 1880 until 1896, when Edison made the first public projection in New York, a chain of inventions took place until the introduction of cinema; Marconi in 1896 (Adler and Rodman, 1991, p. 11) filed one of the patents for the radio, which was first operated in 1900 (Fellow, 2005, p. 241) which still needed some more years of work to become commercial; and in 1923, Farnsworth and Zworykin (Adler and Rodman, 1991, p. 23) applied for patents for the television, which were awarded years later (Fellow, 2005, p. 272). Television, due to the II World War, conflicts about the technology and a four years “freeze” on new stations applied in the United States, did not develop on a large scale until the Fifties (Winston, 1998, p. 120-125). Cable television began its transmissions in the United States in the late Forties (Parsons, 2008, p. 19) but it became popular by the Fifties (2008, p. 76). Satellite television was envisaged in the late Sixties (2008, p. 244) but its momentum only took off after 1975 (2008, p. 298).

97).²⁴ Vincent Mosco explains that “the world [...] began to change fundamentally in the spring of 2000 when stock markets everywhere, led by the *dotcom* and telecommunications firms that had propelled the boom, began a steep slide. By the fall of 2002, markets were at 6-year lows, most of the new Internet companies had disappeared” (Mosco, 2004, p. 4). Later James Carey (2005), looking back and analysing all those expectations that flourished in the Nineties, said ironically that

[In the 1990's a] new economy, a new politics, a new world order, indeed a new and advanced species of men and women who were weaned on the computer and transported across all borders of space and time by the power of the Internet [was foreseen]. An enduring peace, an unprecedented rise in prosperity, an era of comfort, convenience and ease and a political world without politics or politicians –these were the hopes that cultivated a wave of belief in the magically transforming power of technology [...]. (2005; p. 445)

The Internet as a platform was perceived as an opportunity to link different levels of our society leaving mediators aside. The commercial bias, the simplification of messages or the corporatism of journalists seemed to be coming to an end: it seemed to be the long-awaited solution to the illnesses derived from journalism as a mediator. Although from different backgrounds, many scholars praised the Net: it would create more egalitarian, more open environments (Papacharissi, 2002, p. 13-14); it would be much simpler for minority movements to be heard in the 'public sphere' (Atton, 2002, pp. 133-150); new entrants could access the business without having to risk enormous capitals (Benkler, 2006, p. 190) and the Net would bring us a revived democracy, a place with more participation and ideas. (Tambini, 1999, pp. 325-326)

Robert McChesney, as cited by Almirón, from his scepticism, described the Net as the new myth of the moment:

“The [...] myth is that the Internet will set us free. We have no reason to worry about corrupt policy making, corporate control, lousy journalism, or hypercommercialism because the advent of the Internet ends the problem of broadcast scarcity [...] and means that everyone communicates on a relatively equal playing field. [...] Anyone can launch a blog or website to finally compete with the big guys. It is just a matter

²⁴ Some economists have described this bubble as one that took place between February 1998 and February 2000, when a high number of Internet related firms went public in the States. There was a huge rise in the value of these stock shares that fell even faster from March 2000 onwards (Ofek and Richardson, 2001, p. 8-11).

of time until the corporate media dinosaurs disappear beneath the tidal wave of new media competition” (McChesney, cited in Almirón, 2006b).

One of those that expected more from the Internet was Dan Gillmor, a journalist at the *San Jose Mercury*, in California, who in *We the media* stated that everybody would be able to make their opinions public and become a medium by themselves:

Grassroots journalism is part of the wider phenomenon of citizen-generated media — of a global conversation that is growing in strength, complexity, and power. When people can express themselves, they will. When they can do so with powerful yet inexpensive tools, they take to the new-media realm quickly. When they can reach potentially global audience, they literally can change the world (Dan Gillmor, 2004, p. xv)

M. Conniff, cited by Ruggiero & Winch (2004), following what was a relatively frequent feeling, leaves journalists only the final function of writing their own obituary. Conniff also expressed trepidation for the future cultural authority of traditional journalists: “Newspapers are going to get blown away by any Tom, Dick, or Jane Soave Bolla with a computer and an address on the Internet. They'll be lucky if they're still around to write their own obituaries” (Citation in Ruggiero and Winch, 2004, p. 4).

ii. COMPUTERS IN THE NEWSROOM

The introduction of the Internet in newsrooms from the mid 90's has been preceded by the computerisation of journalistic work in most developed countries. In the United States, this process began in the late Sixties, first involving areas unrelated to the newsroom, but as soon as word processing technology reached a certain quality, it expanded into the newsroom. “Acceptance was slow at first, but occurred without serious damage, if any at all, to the editorial product” (Garrison, 1983, p. 6). It demanded new positions, such as that of production editor, but despite these changes, “it has more of an opportunity to review incoming materials and choose between the stories offered” and “provide the newsroom with greater control over the quality of the finished product” (1983. p. 6-7). “Clearly, the adaptation of the electronic editing system by the major news services has been an asset to the newspaper newsroom” (1983, p. 6). From 1982 onwards was the time of electronic page composition, after the Knight-Ridder group fully composed their newspaper of Pasadena using computers (1983, p. 9). The

biggest concern, at least in the States, was about the accessibility of medium-sized and small newspapers to the new technology rather than about its adoption by the staff (Garrison, 1998, n.p.). In general, in the United States, journalists saw the computer as an improvement to their daily work and a useful tool that could reinforce their core function. In terms of power, there were winners and losers, but journalists were overwhelmingly on the former side. Herbert Gans settles this matter with the following comment:

the computer has not significantly affected the basic editing processes. At the magazines, articles must still pass muster from a hierarchy of top editors, who order rewrites of stories for the same reasons now as in the past. (Gans, 2004/1979, p. XV)

Not everywhere was this computerisation as harmless as it was in the States. In an exceptionally confrontational environment, British newspapers introduced most of these new technologies from 1986 onwards, after a long and painful industrial conflict, mainly with printers (McNair, 1994, p. 166). In Spain, as in other European countries, the computerisation was peaceful, taking place later than in the States, but before the United Kingdom, and in general it was not at all disruptive (Bilbao et al. 1997, n.p.).

iii. ADOPTION IN TWO STAGES

In the 1980s, print media in developed countries were already looking for new ways to deliver their content, aware that the traditional model — on paper and with physical delivery — was inefficient and expensive. They tested the videotext or even the fax (Boczkowski, 2004b, p. 7), not always without success. As soon as the World Wide Web and the Mosaic Internet browser were launched in 1993, most newspaper's managers seemed to accept that the Internet had the potential they were looking for. This feeling, detected in conferences and industrial meetings, meant that most print media rushed to be present on the Internet.²⁵ By July 1999, all of the 100 biggest American newspapers but two had opened an online edition and the number of online papers around the world

²⁵ Pablo Boczkowski, in this book *Digitizing the News* (2004b, p. 55), citing Randy Bennett, vice-president of electronic publishing at the Newspaper Association of America, describes “the mood at the 1998 “Connections” conference as follows: “The days of evangelism, hand-wringing and talk of experimentation are really over... Online newspaper publishing is now an established business and people aren’t looking to be convinced anymore. They came here this year for hard, detailed information about the logistics of online publishing.”

went from 20 in 1994 to nearly 4,000 in 1997 (Boczkowski, 2004b, p. 52). Peter Dahlgren, in 1996, described the environment on those days saying that

One gets a sense of a gold rush climate, where many corporate actors are moving to stake out a claim –though the viability of the economics are far from self-evident, even in the newspaper realm (1996, p. 60).

Media companies acted as if they equated the Internet with the future. An Nguyen in 2008, in a paper called “Facing the fabulous monster” (referring to the Internet), said that from 1994 to 2000, what traditional media intended to do was prevent other agents occupying the online space, fearing to be overtaken by newcomers. They were moved by fear rather than by a desire to become a true and innovative player, developing the Internet model in full (2008, p. 92). Behind this behaviour is the risk that “[a]s newer media enter the marketplace and are adopted [...], spending on existing media [could ...] decline because audiences have limited amounts of money and time that must be reallocated across both old and new media. Replacement of old media by new media is the result” (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2000, p. 24). Then, editors' reactions were to be present at both sides of the electronic revolution. The consequence of this rush was that, in general, there were no specific plans about what to do online, except being there. “There was the sense that [print media] companies had to be there and later they would ask why and what for”, explains a manager in *El País*, a Spanish leading print and online newspaper²⁶. Mixing, on the one hand, the need to be online and, on the other, the wish to keep the investment at the lowest level, the result was that “most of the newspapers [were] producing *shovelware*²⁷, print stories reproduced on Web pages, with few changes other than key words painted hypertext blue” (Pogash, 1996, n.p.). By the end of the century, most newspapers sites were offering a very poor product with two basic components: (a) material from their print editions – *shovelware* – and (b) news wires. Pablo Boczkowski says that

Research has shown that repurposing was the dominant information practice not only of American but also of Asian and European online papers during this period (2004b, p. 55).

²⁶ Gumersindo Lafuente in a personal interview with author, on February, the 8th, 2011 (see Chapter VI about Lafuente and *El País*).

²⁷ *Shovelware*. Term frequently used by scholars to define contents that were re-used on online media, originally produced to print or broadcasted media. (Franklin et al, 2005, p. 243)

An Nguyen summarizes this phenomenon, in these terms:

Instead of adding original content to their online news services, for instance, [online-media] adopt the “safer” practice of reformatting already-owned content, “shovelware” content, as a way to minimise the cost and to ensure that these services will not become disruptors of the traditional products that are still profitable and close to their heart (Nguyen, 2008, p. 95).

With this wish to control costs, most breaking-news came from wires. For instance, Gasher and Gabriele studied the Canadian *Montreal Gazette* in 2001 and found that “less than nine per cent (8.9) of the items in the online edition came from staffers [40 per cent in the hardcopy], while close to 90 per cent (88.7) came from three wire services [less than half this percentage in the print edition]” (2004, p. 317). In Spain, David Sancha (2005) studied three of the most visited online newspapers and found that in *La Vanguardia*'s case all its stories were from wires, in *El Periódico*'s they represented a 95.6 per cent and in *El Mundo*'s, 73.9 per cent.²⁸ While experts were claiming that hypertextuality, multimediality, and interactivity were the Internet's real added value (Gasher and Gabriele, 2004, p. 314; Deuze, 2004; Deuze, 2003; Boczkowski, 2004a), journalists and media managers were still under-exploiting them ten years later.

Perhaps due to the constant increase in the Internet's user numbers (Internet World Stat, 2011b), the proliferation of blogs (Blogcount, 2003), or the steady decrease of print newspaper sales (OECD, 2010, p. 38), things began to change in 2005.²⁹ Media companies seemed to have decided to produce a form of journalism more suitable for the Net, rather than continuing to treat it as a by-product.³⁰ An Nguyen identifies a wave of investments from traditional media companies in online ventures that he interprets as proof of a new attitude. In 2008, Nguyen says that “the year 2005 could have been the milestone for this new stage” (2008, p. 100). Later, he added that

²⁸ The survey took place between May 23 and 29th, 2005, analysing online news published in these news sites.

²⁹ Most editors and managers interviewed by Hermida and Thurman (2008, p. 347) reckon that they accepted user generated content fearing marginalization in front of other online sites.

³⁰ The developments on the Net, beyond journalism, may explain this change of attitude: by 2005, the new “big thing” was the web 2.0, an approach to the Net that stressed the one to one relationship over the one to many that was the initial deployment of the Internet. By then the “blogosphere”, as a symbol of the empowerment of readers, a new phenomenon that had been born when an specific application became available, between 1998 and 2000, was swelling and even some blogs were amongst the most followed Internet sites (Gill, 2004, n.p.).

[r]esearch has shown that online journalism has entered a second, more rigorous and vigorous development stage, in which the reluctance to pour resources into developing innovative online news services in the first stage (from the mid 1990s to the mid 2000s) is replaced with a stronger commitment to capitalizing on their diverse socio-technical potential (Nguyen, 2010, p. 224).

By 2005, Rupert Murdoch, the owner of News Corporation, the conglomerate that includes *The Times* and *The Sun* in the United Kingdom, as well as the *New York Post* and *The Wall Street Journal* in America, among others, gave a speech at the American Society of Newspaper Editors where he adopted a humble attitude, accepted that journalism was missing the opportunity of giving some reasons for their past approach and announced changes.

There are a number of reasons for our inertia [...]. First, newspapers as a medium for centuries enjoyed virtual information monopoly [...]. Second, even after the advent of television, a slow but steady decline in readership was masked by population growth that kept circulations reasonably intact. Third, even after absolute circulations started to decline in the 1990s, profitability did not. But those days are gone. The trends are against us (Murdoch, 2005, n.p.).

Then, he explained what could be called a 'u' turn in the media's attitude to the Net:

We have to refashion what our web presence is. It can't just be what it too often is today: a bland repurposing of our print content. Instead, it will need to offer compelling and relevant content. Deep, deep local news. Relevant national and international news. Commentary and debate. Gossip and humour (2005, n.p.).

In fact, some changes were seen very quickly and not only in News Corporation. O'Sullivan and Heinonen (2008, p. 365) detect a new attitude towards participation, roughly since 2005. Örnebrig (2008) notes that in Sweden and the United Kingdom the rejection of reader participation became weaker and, in a wider study in the United Kingdom, Thurman and Hermida found that since 2006 there was a clear change in favour of content coming from users.

Our study revealed substantial growth in the opportunities for readers to contribute compared to [...] April 2005. [...] The number of blogs jumped from seven to 118 in the 18 months from April 2005 to November 2006 (Hermida and Thurman, 2008, p. 346).

In Spain, Concha Edo and Díaz Noci (2001, pp. 13-15) reflect that by the end of the century “the new online media do not exist” (Edo, 2000, n.p.), meaning that while online, they are mostly print media on the Net. In my research I found that even now in some newspapers they only offer the print edition plus a few news wires (*Diario de Mallorca*³¹), although since few years ago, the most competitive Spanish news media are in line with what happens in American and Britain. Boczkowski (2010) detects this change in Argentina from 2005/6.

4. JOURNALISTIC DEBATES ABOUT ONLINE NEWS

Key journalistic debates and professional concerns about the new media will now be described. These concerns match the dimension of changes in journalism. In Michael Schudson's words, “everything we thought we once knew about journalism needs to be rethought in the digital age” (Schudson, 2011/2003, p. 205). That is to say the whole concept as well as the journalistic process is under revision.

To be comprehensive, I will employ an order that mirrors the practices of daily journalism:

- the context of these new media (as commercial and political institutions);
- then the production process (in three stages: gathering, production and distribution of contents);
- then the cultural and professional conflicts that arise around the Net and, finally,
- the role that readers are given and its related issues.

This structure, slightly modified, is the one that Mitchelstein & Boczkowski's found when revisiting academic research about this topic (2009). My slight adaptation addresses specific features that apply to my research. As I explain at the end of chapter III where I analyse how this work has been structured, I found that it would be useful to follow what is the common path already discovered by other authors.

i. THE CONTEXT

The business environment for media companies in most developed countries, after

³¹ See Chapter IV.

decades of huge profits³², has become unstable, especially for newspapers that are by far the most relevant form of journalism, at least in terms of staff.³³ This decline is mostly a Western phenomenon, because the number of titles since 2000 has almost doubled worldwide and the press in some emerging economies (Turkey, India) is thriving. In developed countries newspapers lose readers at a high speed and advertisers even faster (OCDE, 2010, p. 9). In the United States, the decline in economic terms, from 2007 to 2009, is the most remarkable: minus 30 per cent, followed by the United Kingdom (-21%) and Spain (-16%) (2010, p. 30). Fewer readers, remarkably young readers, fewer advertisements (2010, pp. 9-11) and, as a consequence, job losses (see footnote 33).

This does not mean that the appetite for news itself is necessarily declining: by contrast, online readership is rocketing: in 2008, in South Korea 77 per cent of people usually read news online, while the average is a 30 per cent for developed countries (2010, p. 75). In the United States, behind texting and taking pictures, the most frequent activity carried out with the phone is checking the news (Comscore, 2011a, p. 28); in Europe, news media are normally the only non-technological sites – social networks and search engines – that rank between the 20 most popular sites.³⁴ In fact, many online news media have many more readers online than on paper. The British *Daily Mail*, whose print edition has a circulation of 2.1 million (Guardian, 2011a) reaches an online readership of 35.9 million (Guardian, 2011b). Other news media in the UK, such as *The Guardian*, selling 256,000 daily copies, had 35.9 million monthly unique online users worldwide in January, 2010 (15.2 in the UK) (Guardian, 2011b). Conversely, regional and local media have worse results: in 2008, all local print press in the UK together (13 newsgroups) had 42.3 million buyers of their print newspapers but just 36 million online users. The revenue reveals where the money is: 90.2 per cent came from print editions,

³² “Newspaper publishers traditionally had significant to very high profit margins” says an OCDE report on print media, talking about the last decade. It remarks that in the States they were 10-13% above average as compared with other industries. In the case of regional newspapers they were “in excess of 20 to 30%” and “more pronounced in Germany, United Kingdom and Ireland” (OCDE, 2010, p. 66).

³³ In America, 40.000 journalists were working in newsrooms for print media in 2009, down from 56.000 in 2001, while 500 journalists were on the national television networks payroll (The Economist, 2011, p. 5).

³⁴ The *BBC* site is 5th and *The Guardian* is the 20th most visited in the UK. In Spain, media in the PRISA Group (*El País*, *Cinco Días* and *As*, all newspapers, and radio *Ser*) are 6th; the biggest net of regional newspapers, Vocento, is 8th; media from the RCS Group (*El Mundo*, *Marca*, *Expansión*) are 9th; *20 minutos*, a news site owned by Schibsted of Norway is 11th (Comscore, 2011b, pp. 32-33). All around Europe news media are, broadly speaking, the only non-technology sites that rank so high. It is also remarkable that sites from countries such as the UK and Spain, whose languages are spoken abroad, are much more popular than those from countries linguistically isolated, such as Germany, Italy or Denmark (2011b, pp. 18-33).

while just 7.1 was raised by the Internet (Newspapers Society, 2010).³⁵

[...] While daily print circulation declined by 4.6 percent in 2008, “the number of unique visitors to newspaper websites grew by 15.8 per cent”. [...] When print and online audiences are combined, many newspapers, in fact, have had an increase in readers. [...]. The problem for the traditional media, then, is not so much a loss of readers, but an outdated advertising based business model. (Kurpius, Metzgar and Rowley, 2010, pp. 359-360)

This “outdated [...] business model” (2010, p. 360) means that online news sites are not generating enough money, because ads are not as effective online as on paper (Drèze & Hussherr, 2003, p. 15) and because most readers do not want to pay to access information online (Annenberg, 2010). As a result, the new online business is not bringing enough revenue to replace print losses and very often they are losing money themselves. Put it simply:

the major problem affecting traditional news providers is not the decline of audiences in and of itself but the degeneration of the existing news business model that tied together news and advertising (Freedman, 2010, p. 39).

At a glance, these are their choices:

American newspapers derive, on average, no more than 10 per cent of their total revenue from their loss-making websites. The planned, selective moves towards charging for Web content in 2010/2011 are a response to this problem. Indeed, they are a tacit recognition that the initial free website strategy has failed in commercial terms. However, erecting paywalls offers no ready solution (Curran, 2010, p. 467).

The weakness of online media business models alarms some scholars, and the downgrading spiral³⁶ that is been detected in medium-sized, small and regional media concern to the point that some have suggested action, studying the option of a public intervention or taxing users to finance the journalistic function (Curran, 2010, pp. 472-474). The proposal is to create a publicly operated and open to all Internet, similar to what has been done with the public television and radio service (Trappel, 2008).

The Net should also be seen under the prism of plurality in relation to media

³⁵ See section 5 ii in Chapter III, for information about Spanish media market.

³⁶ Described by Robert Picard (2002, p. 8), when he explains how a cut in expenditure as a result of a lack of profits could spiral down to become a major threat to the media company.

concentration. Ben Bagdikian explains very vividly this situation.

In 1983 [when he published the first edition of his well-known book about media monopolies], the men and women who headed the fifty mass media corporations that dominated American audiences would have fit comfortably in a modest hotel ballroom. [...] In 2003, five men controlled all these media once run by the fifty corporations of twenty years earlier. These five, owners of additional digital corporations, could fit in a generous phone booth. (2004, p. 27)

Bagdikian describes who these five media corporations are: Time-Warner (115 print titles) (Time-Warner, 2011); The Walt Disney Company, (dozens of television networks); News Corporation, a conglomerate owning dozens of print media, television stations and online news media; Viacom, an American conglomerate based on cinema, television production and “more than 500 digital media properties worldwide” (Viacom, 2011), and Bertelsmann, the only European of them, with 40 television channels, 500 magazines and digital sites in more than 30 countries and the world's leading print and digital publishing company (Bertelsmann, 2011).

Other authors, such as Thierer — who accepts that concentration exists but is “not significantly” bigger than previously (2005, pp. 10-13) — or Compaine (cited by Baker, 2007, p. 54) dispute that this phenomenon could affect plurality, suggesting that the Internet opens the doors to everybody, being the remedy for media concentration. Baker (2007, pp. 97-123) responds that the problem is not that the same information could be seen on many different platforms; as much as more supermarkets do not imply a wider range of products.

[...] In terms of what audiences actually receive, the Internet mostly involves a few major news providers serving up wire news plus some major bloggers providing widely received but minimally financed news or commentary and a few already powerful old media extending their reach and dominance (Baker, 2007, p. 112).

Paterson (2006, n.p.) citing MediaMetrix, says that “US web users spend more than 50% of their time online with websites owned by four companies” and talking specifically about news, adds that “the top news sites correspond almost precisely to the media companies worldwide [...] Time Warner at the top, Viacom, Disney, General Electric, News Corporation, and the *New York Times*”. But what is more worrying is that

the online news audience has demonstrated over the past decade that it will not behave according to utopian predictions. Instead, it behaves as it always had with old media –it identifies (with the guidance of powerful marketing directed its way) a few favourite channels of information, and develops loyalty to these that is extraordinary in view of the potential for taking a wider view of the world (Paterson, 2006, n.p.).³⁷

ii. THE JOURNALISTIC PROCESS

The Internet and new media was expected to offer access to many more sources and a richer range of issues (Garrison, 2000; Machill & Beiler, 2008). More opportunities to access the Net, create pages, be a player, post messages or take part on social networks. In terms of journalistic media, some scholars give us evidence to distrust that initial prediction: Smyrnaio, Marty and Rebillard studied 80 news sites in French, to check if the number of published issues and the level of its redundancy had changed for the better in relation with traditional media. They conclude stating that

[o]nline journalists tend to concentrate on rewriting and editing, relying on existing material at the expense of original reporting [...]. One finding of our study that particularly corresponds to the online newsroom observations is the editorial redundancy among sources. This general redundancy could be more easily understood with case studies showing that ‘online material is mainly coming from competing news sites’ (2010, p. 1258).

I would like to stress that “online journalists tend to concentrate on [...] editing [...] at the expense of original reporting” (2010, p. 1258). I will come back to the controversy that this issue arises.

In a recent research developed in the UK, Redden and Witschge say that

[o]ur overwhelming conclusion is that there is an abundance of news online, but the content of mainstream news outlets is largely the same, with different outlets – often with a very different ethos and editorial stance – using identical quotes, images, and very similar text (2010, p. 184).

In Germany, Gerhards and Schäfer (2010) studied four renowned newspapers, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*, to see if a specific topic, the human genome research, was reported from a

³⁷ See Chapter III for media concentration specifically in Spain.

variety of view-points, with different voices, more framework, analysis or perspective in the print or the online edition. The result has been described in these terms

[w]e found only minimal evidence to support the idea that the Internet is a better communication space as compared to print media. In both media, communication is dominated by (bio- and natural) scientific actors; popular inclusion does not occur. [...] [The] Internet communication seemed even more one-sided and less inclusive than print media communication [...] (2010, p. 155).

They add that other studies ratify their results. Josef Träppel (2008) shows his own concern on detecting a similar trend in the German speaking countries.

Some authors have seen that, contrary to the first predictions, the online media tend to use information from the same sources, usually news agencies, generating a process of isomorphism (Deuze, 2008, p. 20; Paterson, 2006, n.p.) or redundancy. As a result, it is at least doubtful that with the Internet more or different voices or contents are being made public. My research widely confirms these studies, as I will show.

Jodi Dean argues that the Net only creates “the fantasy of abundance”, where more communication does not mean more genuine participation.

The fantasy of abundance both expresses and conceals the shift from message to contribution. It expresses the shift through its emphases on expansions in communication – faster, better, cheaper; more inclusive, more accessible; high speed, broadband, etc. [...] [T]he fantasy occludes the resulting devaluation of any particular contribution. Social network analysis demonstrates clearly the way that blogs, like other citation networks, follow a power law distribution. They don’t scale; instead, the top few are much more popular than the middle few, and the middle are vastly more popular than the smaller (2005, p. 59).

Elsewhere, Dean says that the Net does not mean or imply a better public sphere, because for her the Web is a zero institution: “an empty signifier that itself has no determinate meaning but that signifies the presence of meaning. It is an institution with no positive function at all” (2003, p. 105).

Vincent Miller (2008), referring to “blogging [...], social networking websites and microblogs”, says that these technologies show “larger socio-cultural trends [...] namely a flattening of social bonds [...] and a similar ‘flattening’ of communication in these networks towards the non-dialogic and non-informational [...]” (2008, pp. 387-388). Link these visions about the new emerging culture with traditional journalistic values

and practices and see them under Silverstone's prism (2005, pp. 200-202) and a picture of powerful conflicting realities will emerge.

Related to the matter of plurality, it is relevant to examine how newsmakers establish this relation with news media, how they manage the Internet to maximise their influence, searching for loopholes where they could get their message rubber-stamped by journalism (Dyson, 2000). This is a relationship where both parts, newsmakers and journalism, have interests and get benefits from a mutual collaboration (Davis, 2009). The way these professional sources have adapted to the new online journalism is an issue that has not received much investigation for the moment, but from what Angela Phillips (2010a) has studied, there are a number of reasons for concern. She sees that the Net offers better tools to check news details, but by reducing personal contact, affects the quality of communication between journalists and sources, and due to the overwhelming amount of public sources online, the number of reliable ones is diminishing. As a consequence what is emerging is a form of journalism of a lower quality (2010a, p. 99-101). I also found similar concerns in my research.³⁸

When describing journalistic debates in the information gathering stage, I would like to stress that the Internet works as a huge data base for journalists, giving them much more content than ever before (Sarrica et al, 2010, p. 419). In this sense, there are three questions that demand attention: (a) how this abundance of information can be managed; (b) how this reframes journalists' access to information, about specialism and building up sources and relations of trust; and (c) although later I will address the credibility question in full, here I shall also remember that journalists, when gathering information online, are concerned about the trustworthiness of their sources, about how search engines select data and who is feeding this vast amount of knowledge.

One of the fiercest debates about online journalism stems from the fact that the Net has eroded the boundaries between written press and television or radio: they all converge in what is called multimediality (Deuze, 2004; Steensen, 2010a; Huang et al, 2006). This option has been highly controversial because journalists have to work in two or more formats at the same time, demanding a multi-tasking culture that is often strongly rejected. In a European study in different countries, a group of scholars found that

³⁸ See in Chapter IV a description of how in *Diario de Mallorca* they relate with these agents and in Chapter VI, where journalists at *El País* show their concerns.

there are two important indicators which indicate this resistance [to multitasking]. First, journalists' professional identity remains strongly anchored to print newspapers [...]. The second indicator is the serious communication deprivation which journalists experience, since their knowledge of the editorial initiatives of their various outlets is rather vague and thin (Sarrica et al, 2010, p. 420).

Mark Deuze, as early as in 2004, alerted us to one powerful reason against convergence:

It is important to note that some – including most of the journalists involved [...] feel the industry's primary motive for merging or cooperating across media is saving money. As Devyatkin for example notes: executives in the media industry tend to see new media as a way to make staff downsizing easier – doing more with less people – (2004, p. 143).

Deuze analyses a range of models for applying multimedia, from having different newsrooms (print, radio or television) and mixing their final products on one online platform³⁹ – an approach that leaves most traditional routines untouched –; to a more radical formula, that employs the controversial multitasking journalist, trained to use more than one language at the same time. Cases of radical implementation can be found (eg. all staffers obliged to use all platforms under the threat of dismissal, as García Avilés and Carvajal found in 2008)⁴⁰ to less confrontational approaches, where the integration unfolds just when presenting the final product, as in *Talloussanomat*, in Finland (Thurman and Myllylahti, 2009).

After listing many different aspects of the conflicting implementation of multimedia in newsrooms, Deuze reminds us that “today's news consumer is multi-tasking and, particularly when going online, must be characterised by definition as an active user: surfing the Web, searching databases, responding to email, visiting chat rooms” (2004, p. 146).

Serena Carpenter finds that in the United States, where most online media are based on text, the usage of multimediality is increasing at a good pace, especially since 2006 (2010, p. 1969). Thurman and Lupton studied how the multimedia approach has been adopted in the United Kingdom: from the *BBC*, that introduced the multimedia newsroom ten years ago (Cottle and Asthon, 1999) to the rest of the most popular news

³⁹ It is a formula often seen when companies have radios, print newspapers and television stations, and mixing these three products create an online website, not changing at all their working practices.

⁴⁰ It is the case of a Andalusian subsidiary of a national Spanish media group, sited in Almería, SE Spain.

sites, all media are using it, expecting to generate advertising revenue. There are many journalists joining this movement in newsrooms, but “more research is required to find out how many staff are ‘embracing’ video and audio because of the underlying fear of job losses” (Thurman and Lupton, 2008, p. 451).

A much less controversial issue for journalism seems to be that of hypertextuality.⁴¹ For Steve Paulussen, “it is clear, however, that effective use of internal and external hyperlinks is a basic element of good online media production”. But he adds also that “commercial considerations seem to make websites very cautious of letting viewers escape their family of related businesses” (2004, n.p.). In the United States, in a recent study, Serena Carpenter (2010, p. 1068) has found out that many online newspapers have simply chosen not to let readers navigate outside their site.

A new medium, a new channel, means new characteristics and new ways of working, new standards and patterns of perceiving, understanding and assimilating messages. As a consequence, it should develop its own new genres, those general structures of the message that producers and consumers recognise and accept as a standard. It seems obvious that, as soon as users, on both sides, get acquainted with the new technology, new Net-born genres should appear. It is generally accepted that immediacy, a particular and powerful feature of the Internet, is pushing for the breaking-news genre, something that I also found in this research. But there is still space for other journalistic genres online, and for theories explaining them. Steen Steensen (2009) analysed the situation, finding that new genres are failing to fully emerge, although more recently described the “feature journalism [...] as a family of genres that share” some common characteristics (Steensen, 2011, p. 89). In my field work I found some sorts of new genres, but they were not yet well anchored.

Immediacy has not been at the very centre of journalistic debates⁴², although recently Pablo Boczkowski in Argentina found out new emerging patterns of readership, meaning that journalistic routines are experiencing a deep transformation (Boczkowski, 2010). As online journalism is getting acquainted with the new online environment, more and more conflicts are emerging in relation with the omnipresent dichotomy

⁴¹ Hyperlinking is described as a clear advantage for users but, since the very beginning, newspapers were not using it for commercial reasons: it sends readers to other sites (Dimitrova et al, 2003, p. 403). Other authors, as Salaverría, posit that this feature opened many options (what he says it was a bit of a myth) that in the end produced “a much modest reality” (Salaverría, 2005, p. 520. Translation, mine).

⁴² See footnote 22 on page 29.

between speed and quality, which is also affected by immediacy. Authors such as Møller have alerted that online breaking-news means a huge revolution in the way news is handled. Møller has also referred to the fact that when analysing these new emerging trends, scholars should keep in mind that journalists are always looking to their competitors rather than to their readers (Møller-Hartley, 2011a, pp. 73-85).

It should not be forgotten that the Net is a new environment where communication has no national or continental boundaries;⁴³ where there is a compression in time and space (Weiss and De Macedo, 2009, p. 588). This characteristic is relevant for some news media, because their potential area of coverage, due to the language they employ, has unexpectedly increased dramatically while others have to struggle still inside their old boundaries. Those media sharing a common language are suddenly in a “space of flows” instead of a “space of places,” which is the new logic of our society, as described by Manuel Castells (2010/1996, pp. 440-446).

I have to underline, with Matt Carlson (2007), a less obvious journalistic function, related to the presentation of news: giving readers an associated gradation of importance, a scale, a framework where every piece of content has a hierarchy. “The [traditional] news product provides a representation of the relative importance of news items, reflected in such tropes as ‘top’ stories, which refers as much to importance as it does placement: top of the front page or top of the broadcast. A whole language of newsworthiness – breaking, exclusive, featured – signals relevance in relation to the other items in the news of the day (2007, p. 1017). The Net, especially news search engines, has a less obvious hierarchical presentation but, as I found out at one of the newsrooms, it also has its own internal logic that a team of journalists was getting familiar with.⁴⁴ Connected to traditional professional methods, journalists tend to value a presentation following the classical hierarchy, like the one used in print (2007, p. 1022). Many reflections on this professional value can still be perceived in online news-media, even unexpectedly, on the side of readers who seem to still prefer online news with the hierarchical structure of print press.

⁴³ Despite this theoretical openness, in reality there have been many reasons found to impede the Nets’ reaching everybody: low income; human capital; age, as a demographic factor; political restrictions; language; connectivity, etcetera (Beilock and Dimitrova, 2003, pp. 239-240)

⁴⁴ Some journalists working with search engines say that they have learnt a particular hierarchy in them, which they are now used to. (See *Efe*’s quality checkers, in Chapter V, and especially Romero’s comments.)

iii. PROFESSIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL MATTERS

The Internet was posed to generate a cultural clash between new requirements and traditional journalistic values and practices (Mitchelstein & Boczkowski, 2009). Confronted with this unavoidable threat to their traditional role and their social self image as a conventional profession, journalists engaged in passionate debates defending their activity, often positioning themselves against what the Net implied (Paulussen et al. 2011, p. 5). Some of these controversies will be described in this section, although those related with audiences, perhaps the most relevant of all, will be seen later, at the section iv.

What the Net modifies, in terms of how news is produced, has been described as a continuum (Lewis, 2012): on one end we find the traditional news production model, based on a group of professionals sending information unilaterally to passive audiences; and at the opposite end, a new online model, where everybody, regardless of their training, qualifications or social background, can publish online what they want, assisted on whoever would like to contribute to these stories, in what is called an “open participatory model”. In the middle, a wide collection of mixed alternatives. Seth Lewis (2012), among others (Robinson, 2010; Anderson, 2009; Møller-Hartley, 2013), posits that journalists are making a painful transition from the first position, where they were in full control, to the second, and that they are radically diminishing their role in the process.

In addition to these two types (or stereotypes) of journalism, some authors refer to more distinctive functions: reporting on the one hand, news aggregation on the other. Reporters are associated with traditional forms of journalism mostly, and not only from print newspapers, based on producing original stories, beats and getting in touch with authentic news sources. News aggregation, on the contrary, is usually linked to online journalism, and in rough terms means taking the Net as the source for what is published, minimising contacts with offline sources (Anderson, 2011c, p. 157). Journalism would be in motion from the traditional model to the new one. And those in charge of this transition tend to prefer the role of the reporter, although some “journalists are more likely to embrace innovations and organizational change if they think they can result in better journalism” (Paulussen et al. 2011, p. 5). In my research I found both types of journalists, but in the second case they mostly said that they were not copying from

other media but were trying their best to produce original content⁴⁵.

Jannie Møller-Hartley (2011b, pp. 343-368) made a revealing comparison between journalistic behaviours which are used to create capital — recognition — in a print newsroom and ones which do it in an online form, focusing on how stories are processed rather than on their content. She analyses two radically different working days, one when journalists mostly have to get stories from news sites and another when a breaking-news story offers them the opportunity to produce original reporting. From this study, she assesses which values on the online environment generate cultural capital, helping to shape and becoming part of the new professional *habitus*⁴⁶.

In any case, this transition is not a smooth one, as it implies accepting “many threats to the most cherished values and standards of journalism” from the most deeply rooted to the less relevant, as John Pavlik said in 2001 (2001, p. XI). Matters such as “[a]uthenticity of content, source verification, accuracy, and truth are all suspect in a medium where anyone with a computer and a modem can become a global publisher” (Pavlik, 2001, p. XI). Authorship was prominent in professional debates about the Net, since the very beginning, due to some untrue stories that stigmatised the online journalism (Allan, 2006).⁴⁷ More than a decade later, I have found many journalists who are strongly opposed to the Net for this particular reason.

The history of online news shows that many journalists would like to ignore some of the specific Internet features and advantages. It seems that a part of them feel comfortable with some functionalities of the Internet but not with others. In a very apt analogy, Nick Couldry explains that the Net, while being a three-dimensional platform, allows two-dimensional work at the same time, clearly enhancing previous capacities such as speed or range. For Couldry, the traditional journalistic media model, even online, could be compared to a two-dimensional approach (unilateral, “we talk, you listen”) that runs easily on this platform, ignoring the fact that the Net could potentially be interactive and multimedia-based, the third dimension in this analogy (2009, p. 439). This partial adoption of the Net should not be ruled out as a model with some success, because

⁴⁵ Angela Phillips analyses this matter in a paper in 2010, arising concerns about the future of investigative journalism since most online media copy material from colleagues, not citing their sources. (2010b)

⁴⁶ Møller's sociological concepts come from the Bourdieu's theory of practice, that will be explained in Chapter III.

⁴⁷ Allan mentions stories such as one statement about an allegation about the fall of the TWA 800 flight, by a former White House Press Officer, Pierre Salinger, based on an Internet page that was untrue or a *France-Soir* picture of Diana of Wales' accident, taken from the Net but a fake. (2006, pp. 22-24 & 28)

media companies and many other actors – such as politicians and economic agents, who are interested in the survival of this role of a mediator – are still quite powerful.

The point [...] is to recognize that, behind our academic paradigm of ‘mass communication’, lie many continuing social, political and economic forces which it is our task to trace, not judge in advance (2009, p. 447).

In this block of professional concerns, I will include the matter of online *tabloidisation*. Some concepts need to be clarified beforehand. Anglo-saxon and a few other north European countries, have developed since around 1833, the “penny press”, a sort of print media based on very emotional stories, especially related to celebrities and scandal, issues not often seen in the rest of the press, which are presented in a very simple, dramatic and visual way, that attracts large audiences, especially those who are not so interested in mainstream topics such as politics or business – “stories to interest the public instead of stories in the public interest” – (Franklin et al, 2005, p. 258). They are “characterized by its sensational and emotive content, contrasted starkly with the rational and sober emphasis of the existing newspapers” (2005, p. 279) and are printed in a smaller format, called “tabloid”. They are hugely popular and, according to scholars such as Örnebring and Jönsson (2004, p. 284) they feed an alternative public sphere, different from the mainstream, but useful as it integrates readers and gives a place to other sorts of topics. Nowadays, and since the second half of the last century, this style has migrated to radio and especially to television, where it has taken root. Despite its huge circulations, journalists from the mainstream media look down on tabloids (2004, p. 283). There are no self-proclaimed “tabloid” online media, but some news-sites seem to be clearly leaning towards this style while others, aligned with mainstream media, show a tendency to accept some content usually found in tabloid print media.⁴⁸

In journalistic terms, the debate is about who decides what should be published: when decided by professionals, it includes what is important but when decided by audiences, stories tend to be less relevant, more emotional or, in print terms, 'tabloid'-like. CW Anderson describes that some journalistic sites are already working with “algorithmic” audiences (2011a), where what is published responds to what is most read. I found

⁴⁸ The online *Daily Mail* in the United Kingdom seems to be defining a sort of electronic tabloid medium. Spain have never had an important *tabloid* print press market and, as a consequence, no online media accept this qualification (Redondo, 2011, p.122).

everywhere in this research journalists concerned about how far they may go in this 'tabloidization' process, especially in media whose print-brands were not previously associated with it.⁴⁹

iv. THE AUDIENCE AND ITS INTERACTIONS

The role of the audience has changed dramatically since the arrival of the Net. Not only in the sense that members of the public have much greater impact when it comes to taking decisions about where, how, when and in which format they get their information; but also in the sense that they can now express their opinions in real time, often replacing journalists themselves. The imaginary boundary between professionals and amateurs has been moving fast in favour of the newcomers, despite the obvious critiques from the journalistic field (Robinson, 2010; Lewis, 2012), whose members tend to defend their autonomy in front of other powers, including the audience among them (Deuze, 2005b, p. 447).

This empowerment of those “formerly known as the audience” (Rosen, 2006, n.p.) is part of a wider and more participative understanding of the Net: “[w]ith new information technologies it is now possible to harness the intelligence of huge numbers of people, connected in very different ways and on a much larger scale than has ever been possible before” (Malone, 2006, p. 3). It is a revolutionary and libertarian way of gathering intelligence, decentralising production, allowing everybody to input a bit and making big projects (Keen, 2007, p. 42). Some authors, in a purely post-modern approach, see this as a future alternative model for our usual centralised system of production.

What we are seeing now is the emergence of more effective collective action practices that are decentralized but do not rely on either the price system or a managerial structure for coordination. (Benkler, 2008, p.xiv).

In fact, some non-journalistic sites and platforms are succeeding in this way, from *Wikipedia* to *Youtube* (Brabham, 2008). It is a model that has been controversial: while some scholars recognise that it can help the community to reach certain goals, others strongly dismiss it due to its lack of rigour and quality (Keen, 2007). What is relevant

⁴⁹ Personal interviews with staff in *Efe*, *El País* and *El Mundo*. See chapters V, VI and VII.

for the purpose of this research is that the Internet, by allowing everybody to be a sender or a receiver of information, making possible a one to one link, many to many, one to many or many to one at the same time (Couldry, 2009, p. 438), opens the doors to audience participation in news media. That means that journalists have to accept that readers are not passive but they can challenge their texts, can collaborate and even improve them (Domingo, 2008a; Jha, 2008); or eventually replace traditional journalists altogether (Gillmor, 2004).

Traditionally, professionals used to control the boundaries of their activities (Gieryn, 1983), in order to preserve what was their field, avoid interferences and defend their social role. Among them were journalists concerned by the fact that the Net has broken completely their monopoly of the distribution of news. As could have been foreseen, journalists' attitude towards interactivity has been highly critical; as Thurman (2008) and Hermida and Thurman (2008) have shown, mistrust was and it still is (as I found in my research) the predominant feeling. Nevertheless, reluctantly, late, and perhaps aware of the power that the Internet gives to the audience, journalists have begun to accept an increase in the participation of users and the interrelation with audiences. (Lewis, 2012)⁵⁰

Nowadays, after some years of practice and investigation, scholars have grouped this participation in journalistic sites in two formats⁵¹:

(a) Participatory Journalism. A mix between professional journalism, which forms the core of the model and is in control of the operation, and user-generated content (UGC). These contributions range from simple valuations (voting on a story) to comments or a mix between stories produced by users and some input from professionals (Steensen, 2010a). The “literature on participatory journalism is rather scarce, as researchers have primarily focused on the emergence of citizen journalism as an alternative to professional journalism rather than on the

⁵⁰ Domingo et al. (2008) studied 16 online news media and their level of interactivity. They detected an increase in the acceptance of external participation but concluded by saying that the “core journalistic role of the 'gatekeeper' who decides what makes news remained the monopoly of professionals even in the online newspapers that had taken openness to other stages beyond interpretation” (p. 335).

⁵¹ Strictly speaking, interacting with a medium is a very open concept. A member of the public can interact with a medium even when ignoring it, as well as when sending a message to it. Nevertheless, I am describing here the most common and widely accepted uses of what interactivity on online media is, when a real interchange of content takes place. Steensen (2010a, p. 5) says that journalistic studies usually employ just two of the six main functions that could be labelled as interactivity.

synergy between both” (Paulussen and Ugille, 2008, p. 25).⁵²

(b) Citizen Journalism. This is a model where journalistic content is produced by ordinary citizens. Some websites can be considered typical examples of this practice, such as *Wikinews*, a collaborative website where ordinary citizens can produce their own stories, as far as they apply the journalistic rule of offering a neutral point of view (Thorsen, 2008), *Ohmynews*, a South Korean⁵³ news media that “rel[ies] largely on members of the general public rather than on a professionalized staff to supply its stories” (Kim and Hamilton, 2006, p. 541), or *Indynews*, an international network of sites produced by anti-system organizations (Garcelon, 2006) and, quantitatively more relevant, most weblogs published by non-journalists, offering stories, comments and some sort of collaborative material (Tovey, 2008, p. 459), that emerged more or less from 2000.

Now, what really is challenging traditional journalism is what has been said by ordinary citizens or by news sources on social networks, especially *Twitter*, the micro-blogging site, described by Alfred Hermida as a tool that could potentially “provid[e] a constantly updated representation of the lives, interests and opinions of the users or the service”, produced entirely by the audience and with no professional participation (Hermida, 2011, p. 3). Michael Schudson gives journalists reasons to fear the power of the Net: “No matter how skilled the journalists in a large newsroom or well informed and well placed their sources, the smartest person is likely to be someone else, somewhere else, and thanks to the Internet, he or she may have already started a blog or posted a comment on yours” (Schudson, 2011/2003, pp. 208-209).

Of course, in this debate we can also find the other point of view: Paulussen and Ugille say that “online media observers [...] point [...] out that the question of whether blogging and other forms of citizen journalism are threatening professional journalism is losing relevance” (Paulussen and Ugille, 2008, p. 26) while Zvi Reich, who studied a number

⁵² Related to participatory journalism, I have to mention a line of thought and action that defends a wider concept of participatory culture, based on people solving problems (Brabham, 2008) or users and consumers taking decisions about what information they get, as in the *Indynews*' case (Garcelon, 2006) or *Ohmynews* (Kim and Hamilton, 2006). Related to these concepts, the idea of crowd-funding has also emerged. This concept means that users decide and pay for what they want to be informed about (*Spot.us*) (Aitamurto, 2011).

⁵³ With some subsidiaries in other countries and languages, not as successful as the Korean main site.

of sites offering citizen journalism, concludes stating that in spite of well-wishers, the model is not working. He gives some reasons (weak, informal and uncontrolled organisations, limited journalistic knowledge), the most relevant of all being that the access to news sources is very limited for bloggers (2008, pp. 742-743). This point links this analysis to Couldry's thesis, about how a two-dimensional approach can work and succeed in a three-dimensional system (2009). On their part, Messner and DiStasso analysed the content of 120 American weblogs and found that instead of opening new threads of reflection, or enriching the public sphere with new contents, “they heavily relied on the traditional media as sources” (2008, p. 458).

For Domingo (2008a), during the years of utopia, a myth about citizen participation was created, a myth that does not match either with journalistic culture, which “is counterintuitive” (2008a, p. 698), or with their capacity to interact with readers.

[...] [I]n practice the professional culture and the priority given to immediacy –which fitted better the values and routines of traditional journalism– made them perceive audience participation as a problem [...] (2008a, p. 698).

Deborah Chung (2008) studied how much readers use the interactive features that news media offer to get in touch.

[T]he findings [...] suggest that online audiences are not using interactive features extensively contrary to anticipation by media scholars and the news industry. These findings indicate that online news producers need not worry about adopting all types of interactivity that are promoted through various interactive features (2008, p. 672).

I would like to spotlight a specific aspect of online media connection with readers, an issue briefly mentioned by Schröder and Larsen (2010): are readers usually aware of the full available online offer or are users concentrating their attention in a rather limited number of news-media, to whom they get used, ignoring the rest of the offer? These authors focus their attention upon understanding how users value “worthwhileness” when choosing online media. My question would rather be phrased as follows: how loyal are Internet users and how aware are they of online competitors? This research has got some interesting findings in this area⁵⁴.

⁵⁴ Thurman and Myllylahti (2008, p. 693) find that when, in 2008, the *Taloussanomati* redesigned its site, it lost a lot of readers, which hints at audiences loyalty to formats and contents.

This matter is closely related to the excess of information available online. From very early on, the Internet was associated with the achievement of an endless offer of every kind of content, information and entertainment from very different sources. The Internet meant passing from just a couple of newspapers on a newsstand, and some other broadcast media, to thousands of online media, most of them available for free. How will a reader react when confronted with so wide a range of publications? Some authors posit that branding makes the difference. Ots, describing a particular situation, explains why he considers that brands are the only useful tool, because

customers will not be interested in extending the search for options beyond what they already know. Tungate describes himself sitting at the Universal News & Cafe in New York, which carries more than 7,000 magazine titles, where he, overwhelmed by the variety of choice, settles with the five titles he knows the best [his preferred brands] (Ots, 2008, p. 2).

Some other authors consider that in the news media environment, where products “are easily substitutable, have low cost [in fact usually no cost at all] and [there is] high competition [...] frequent reminders of the brands by means of logos, advertising and other methods are necessary to keep the brand and product as preferred by the target audiences” (Shaver & Shaver, 2008, p. 80). In any case, once users get familiarised with a medium, despite being so easy to change to another, how prone are they to look for another formats, practices or styles? How rigid and resilient are their behaviours? Are users less loyal to an online news medium than to a print one due to the change being much easier and free of charge?

Flavián, Guinalíu and Gurrea (2006) studied how familiarity and usability influence users' choice of new media. They divided users in two groups: experienced and novice ones. Their conclusions are that event though the familiarity factor has low influence upon novice users, it is still important for experienced readers, whereas and the usability feature is key for novices as well as experienced users.

These results could help to allay fears in the press sector arising from growing competition. In fact, as newspaper publishers know the factors that affect levels of loyalty can work in this way to create and maintain a base of loyal clients in the new digital media. This will reduce the range of possible opportunistic behaviors by online readers and, consequently, the number of supplier changes (2006, p. 372).

5. THE SPANISH LITERATURE ON ONLINE JOURNALISM

Communication studies were introduced in Spain in the Seventies, closely linked to journalism and within a social and political environment strongly influenced by the Francoist dictatorship that controlled all intellectual activity.⁵⁵ From the Nineties, this field got institutional recognition, as it was introduced in many universities. However, it still lacked the necessary scientific production in order to be fully recognised. Rodrigo and García (2010) made a diagnosis of this academic field:

Since the 1990s, Spanish communication studies have been going through a new phase. [...] Consequently, the institutional consolidation of the field of research in Spain is a fact, something that cannot be said (at least, not so resolutely) of scientific production and its impact. To achieve a greater degree of maturity in this second case, it is necessary for Spanish communication theory to start to make more novel contributions (2010, p. 278).

Rodrigo and García surveyed the 12 most relevant Spanish communication academics, whose comments form the backbone of their work. Their conclusions give us a glimpse of how journalistic research has developed in recent years in Spain.

Spanish faculties focus[ed] more on being professional schools than research centres. [...] As a result, research is less developed, submerging us at the lowest levels internationally (2010, p. 282).

In general, the Spanish communication field is dominated by a normative line of thought that focuses its attention on regulating journalism. When the Net arrived, Spanish scholars stressed the importance of avoiding changes. For them, only those with the professional qualifications to be a mediator should carry out this job and, as a consequence, something must be done to prevent what Gillmor (2004) called the democratisation of journalism. Jaime Alonso is an example of this point of view, and posits that

[t]echnology should not show the path to how journalism has to be but rather the other way around, it must be journalism and its professional criteria, coming from practitioners and scholars, that must shape the technological innovations to the professional good practices (2005, p.

⁵⁵ See Chapter III for the Spanish media environment and its recent history.

528)⁵⁶.

Casasús (2001), more or less in the same normative line defends the fact that

the function of journalism on the Internet is to look after the integral ethics of the communicative activities inside the virtual space. First, it is necessary to identify the journalists regarding other informants. Second, to achieve an ethical commitment [...]. This ethical commitment will be what will distinguish the digital journalism regarding the digital communication in general. In the digital era ethics is the only reason for journalism to exist (2001, pp. 49-50).

Jesús Canga and Elena Real insist on the same position: for instance, the former asks “who else than journalists could have to right to put content on the Net?” (2001, p. 45) while the latter defends the position that online journalism must employ only professionals that “liking it or not, have to fulfill two conditions: holding an academic degree in journalism and being a compulsory member of the official professional organization whatever it is” (2005, p. 509). For her, these conditions would shield the public from newcomers that are rather dangerous for this function as mediators. José Perceval says that scholars are now confronted with a new field, “in a liquid state”, that they have to reject citizen journalism and “defend the need for professionals” (2008, p. 85). Salvat and Paniagua (2007) try to draw a clear border between what has been produced by journalists and what has not, remarking upon the differences between them and the need to be aware about who the author is in each case. Elías (2010) repeats again that professionals are key to offering information at least to elites that want to know what is really happening. Carlos Macià Barber, following this general trend, says

the fact that one person could do well at DIY does not mean that he is an electrician or a carpenter. In journalism, not everybody can become a journalist, even having the legal right to act as one. Firstly, because the labour market is restricted, secondly because a professional should be much better at writing the piece of news and, thirdly, because the media has a paramount interest in getting readers from content (2007, p. 139).

Núria Almirón describes as a rather sinister “cybernetic cave” the world where people would be forced to live in should journalism end up:

Confronted with the illusion that journalism is no longer needed, I can

⁵⁶ Translations, mine.

affirm the contrary [...]. They are needed to offer the framework and context to news in a society overfed with information but with restricted analytical skills, because its members are isolated in their “cybernetic cave”, away from reality, from messages and ignoring what is behind the news, their intentions, and the economical network that produces content. [...] The current crisis of journalism's values will be solved only by protecting the exercise of this profession, its social responsibility [...]. (2006b, n.p.).

Soriano and Canton (2005), in a more nuanced vision, conclude that the new technology is here to stay, it improves many processes, and despite all criticisms from journalists, what is emerging has not necessarily to be inferior.

Away from the debate about the journalistic role in the online environment, Spanish scholars developed many valuable studies. For instance, Díaz Noci (2001) found critically that the new Spanish online media was mostly print media redirected to the electronic platform, ignoring all its particular languages and features. López and Mellado (2006) studied online media jobs in Spain, their salaries, working conditions and training to conclude that most of the new online journalism has been ill-rooted, with too weak a foundation and that companies were not taking it seriously. Ángeles Cabrera (2001) analysed the relationship between online and traditional media, to conclude that the new ones are still controlled by the latter ones. De Ramón, Paniagua and Sanmartí (2001) researched which last minute stories are published in new online media, to find out that the online immediacy culture is diverging too much from the traditional journalistic tenets, adding that immediacy is not the “natural language” of journalism, and that online media should stress quality instead of speed (p. 166).

Julio Larrañaga (2008, 2009) devoted his efforts to studying the business model of online media, from new publications to blogs. As scholars in other countries had seen, Larrañaga found out that they lacked a solid business proposal and had a lot of unfinished trials without a clear financial case. Caminos, Marín and Armentia (2007) studied, analysed and described the characteristics associated with the new medium and its practical consequences for journalism. Salaverría (2005a, p. 517) analysed what was a myth and what was a reality in the much praised new hypertextual online capability. Núria Almirón (2006a) researched Spanish online media with no print or broadcast editions: from her quantitative approach, she determined their interests, tendencies, and economical prospects. Her work leads to the question of plurality: are the new news

sites offering new contents or not? Her conclusion is that most new sites replicate what is already known in other media.

Nereida Cea's (2010) research gives the present thesis very useful information: she studied how the online media companies were structured in Spain. At the time of her investigation, as was a standard practice in most countries, online and print media were operated by separate subsidiaries, usually in different buildings. In the best of cases, they were different departments of bigger companies, with a very limited contact. The new business was kept away from the cherished print newsrooms, as if it was something experimental. Cea studied two of the media that this thesis will analyse, *El Mundo* and *El País* (p. 39). Her research took place when *El País* was still operating their online interests through a wholly-owned subsidiary company, away from the print newsroom. For its part, *El Mundo* had already merged both businesses, though not yet their teams. Later, when I studied them, both companies had fully integrated both newsrooms.

García Avilés with Bienvenido León (2002) and later with Miguel Carvajal (2008) developed a number of studies about how new technologies were being adopted by traditional media around Spain, from television or radio stations to multimedia groups. These studies show that it can provoke a disruptive process and deep conflicts. The case of one media group, Novotécnica, is quite astonishing, where workers were told to adopt new technologies by a specific date or they would be made redundant. The editor told Avilés and Carvajal (2008) that

[n]ewsroom integration was quick: we announced the decision on a Friday and we moved to a single newsroom the next Monday. In this way, we invited everybody to join in, so that no-one would feel excluded from the project. I think it worked out better. Within a short time, the days of monomedia journalists were numbered (p. 230).

Avilés and Carvajal later explain that

It was 'a take it or leave situation', as the editor explains: "If a journalist does not believe in our model, he or she could be very harmful, for it could undermine staff morale and it could even finally destroy the process. Newsroom convergence's beginning was a hard time" (2008, p. 233).

David Domingo (2006) studied four online media in Catalonia, northeastern Spain (*El Periódico*, *Lamalla.net*, *CCRTV* and *Diari de Tarragona*) employing an ethnographic

methodology. His work mostly confirmed his two central research hypotheses: that online utopias⁵⁷ were not so important in the real newsroom, certainly not the driving force, and that contextual factors, usually internally created in their own companies, were more decisive. In his second hypothesis, the logic of media, a set of rules and practices following Altheide's interpretation (1976, 1984, 1997, 2004), is the most influential factor in defining online journalism.

6. CONCLUSION

Journalists, who for decades have been the only social group with the power of mediating between news sources and audiences, have recently been challenged by the new technology that has opened a space for citizens to join them and have a direct access to what happens and its actors, to those who are producing news, who are relevant players on the public sphere. The boundary between the audience and journalists has blurred, if not vanished. As a result, journalism has had to make a transition from the traditional self-conception of its function — in full control of the relationship with audiences and sources — to a more participative one, where in the best case scenario they could play the role of a privileged agent, one among many others. This move, which in terms of power may be seen as a downgrade, has many additional implications: among others, it challenges what the multimedia means in journalistic terms; how immediacy changes the way journalists, sources and audiences used to behave; and how the hyperlinks translate into the daily production and accessing to news. These changes are shaping a new journalism, which is still struggling to define its identity, determine its language (in a broad sense), fix its rules, and establish its own genres as discursive practices.

In this chapter I have mentioned more processes than those related with pure journalism and its production. This transition is also a socio-cultural conflict, where rooted behaviours, social perceptions and group self-assertiveness are at stake. By examining in detail the adoption of these new technologies by journalists in specific newsrooms, this thesis will consider not only their traditional democratic role, but also the fact that these professionals are a social group trying to preserve a place in the society, adapting

⁵⁷ Domingo with the term 'utopia' refers to the huge expectations that emerged from the technological innovation, ignoring or at least undervaluing what users and adopters have to say.

their behaviour against the most internal and rooted values themselves shaped along decades.

Chapter III

Methodological foundations

How and where this research has been carried out

“Only reflexivity, which is synonymous with method, but a reflex reflexivity based on a sociological 'feel' or 'eye,' enables one to perceive and monitor on the spot, as the interview is actually being carried out, the effects of the social structure within which it is taking place. How can we claim to engage in the scientific investigation of presuppositions if we do not work to gain knowledge (science) of our own presuppositions?”

Pierre Bourdieu (1996, p. 18)

1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will explain my research methodology: how I developed this investigation and where. Most of the chapter is devoted to answering the 'how': the methodology, the theoretical tools employed to understand my data, and why I chose them. In this section I also investigate which news organisations have been studied, where they are and in which political and social environment they perform their journalistic task.

In relation to scientific research, Klaus Bruhn Jensen, in his *Handbook of Qualitative Methodologies for Mass Communication Research* (1991) defines four basic analytical levels, which he argues will be relevant to any investigation. From the most particular to the most general, they are

the object of analysis (as identified and characterized through reference to the purpose and context of the inquiry); *the analytical apparatus or methods* (the concrete operations of inquiry, including the collecting, registering and categorizing of data); *the methodology* (the overall design of the inquiry [...]; [and *the*] *theoretical framework(s)* (the configuration of concepts which specifies the epistemological status of the other levels, and which hence assigns explanatory value to the specific rendition of the object of analysis that the methodology produces) (Italics, mine; Jensen, 1991, pp. 5-6).

I will follow Jensen's path in this chapter, even though for practical reasons in an inverted order. So, I will begin with the most general concepts.

The goal of this investigation, as previously stated, is double: first, to find, clarify and describe the production of news online in a specific environment, or how the new online journalism is being constructed; and second, to understand and explain why the convergence of journalism and the Internet evolves as it does; why it alters the whole communicational relation, on the side of producers, on the side of audiences and even the nature of the process itself (Fenton, 2010, p. 4; Howard, 2002, p. 551). Exploring journalism in this context demands a focus on the journalist at home, that is on the journalist in the newsroom, a site where journalistic values (ideologies) might operate with particular purchase, because it is still mostly in this physical space where journalists share the self-perception of their social function (Couldry and McCarthy, 2004, Robinson, 2011).

The framework of a research is “the configuration of concepts [that] assigns explanatory value to the specific rendition of the object of analysis”, “an overarching frame of interpretation”, as Jensen explains (1991, pp. 5-6). So, I will now introduce the theoretical context that this investigation employs to interpret and decipher the findings.

2. THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research will find and describe how the new culture of online journalism is working in different places, contexts and organisations. It will unravel information that may be relevant for the interpretation of journalism especially in Spain, where the research has been carried out. Making a theoretical interpretation of these behaviours in a broader social and cultural framework will bring up to the surface what these attitudes mean, what its hidden cause would be, and how they can be transposed into a more logical a broader picture.

Pablo Boczkowski, reflecting about the latest investigations on these journalistic issues, remarks that “perhaps, the most striking [...] innovation” of these works are

the wide range of theoretical resources marshaled to interpret the findings, from traditional organizational sociology and mass communication ideas to the growing presence of concepts developed within the field of science and technology studies (Boczkowski, 2011, p. 162)

Turning back to Jensen, this research needs to clearly identify which is the “overarching frame of interpretation” (Jensen, 1991, p. 6) where to fit each piece of data, “to uncover the most profoundly buried structures of the various social worlds” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 7, citing another previous Bourdieu's book, in French); a map that puts each fact in relation to a wider scene, that could take into account those values that act as brakes or accelerators in this process of change.

My choice is Bourdieu's theory of practice and what follows is the rationale for it.

i. BOURDIEU'S THEORY OF PRACTICE

Pierre Bourdieu posits a form of sociological knowledge that he calls 'theory of practice' (1977/1972): it is different from the ethnomethodological or phenomenological forms of

knowledge and also differs from the objectivist approach that “construct[s] the objective relations [...], which structure[s] practices and representations of practices”. His theory of practice “produces science of the social world against the implicit presuppositions of practical knowledge of the social world” (Bourdieu, 1977/1972, pp. 3-6), rooted in everyday life and observation. His approach interprets what appears to be natural or individual, what seems accidental or spontaneous, as a part of much bigger social structures, rooted in more complex, and not so obvious, struggles. I was going to get familiar with what journalists were practising in relation to the Net and my truth should emerge from there. In other words, I would say that departing from the daily practice, my research will try to understand the reasons why agents perceive their role the way they do, and which hidden conceptions are influencing their activities. I will then observe, describe and theorise how and why they react as they do. I will use Bourdieu's map to bridge the distance between daily lives, practices and behaviours on the one hand, and larger social, group structures, on the other. Here he describes the goal of his theory.

I want to understand a woman from Kabylia or a peasant from Bearn, a Turkish migrant worker or a German office worker [...] performing an agrarian rite, following a funeral procession, negotiating a contract, taking part in a literary ceremony, painting a picture, giving a conference, attending a birthday party [...]. They do not have in their heads the scientific truth of their practice which I am trying to extract from observation of their practice. What is more, they normally never ask themselves the questions that I would ask myself if I acted towards them as an anthropologist: Why such a ceremony? Why the candles? Why the cake? Why the presents? Why these invitations and these guests, and not others? And so on. (2003, p. 288)

Pierre Bourdieu's theory stresses the “primacy of relations” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 15), where groups tend to be mutually reinforced by their colleagues' practices, by the general assent to them, seen and accepted usually unconsciously, in the same sort of common sense observed in daily life.

[...] [W]hen the conditions of existence of which the members of a group are the product are very little differentiated, the dispositions which each of them exercises in this practice are confirmed and hence reinforced both by the practice of the other members of the group [...] and also by institutions which constitute collective thought as much as they express it [...] (Bourdieu, 1977/1972, p. 167).

All practices and dispositions form culture, “a system of choices which no one makes” (Bourdieu, cited by Foster, 1986, p. 105). Bourdieu details how social groups organise their environment following the logic of their ordinary lives:

The cognitive structures which social agents implement in their practical knowledge of the social world are internalized, 'embodied' social structures. The practical knowledge of the social world that is presupposed by 'reasonable' behaviour within it implements classificatory schemes [...], historical schemes of perception and appreciation [...] and which function below the level of consciousness and discourse (1984/1979, p. 468).

His key concepts are as follows.

His concepts of *habitus*, field and capital [...] constitute what is arguably the most significant and successful attempt to make sense of the relationship between objective social structures (institutions, discourses, fields, ideologies) and everyday practices (what people do, and why they do it). Most of the ‘big’ theoretical issues being debated and explored in the world of contemporary theory [...] are to some extent explicable in terms of, and have benefited from, Bourdieu’s ‘technologies’ of *habitus*, field and capital. (Webb, Schirato and Danaher, 2002, p. 1)

Let us analyse in depth what they mean: *habitus*, the first concept, is personal and shaped by what everyone has lived, by history, by all that we have learned consciously or not.

Society consists of “objective histories” embodied in systems, organizations, codes, and hierarchies, and “histories incorporated in *habitus*”, which are “personal dispositions toward sensing, perceiving, thinking, acting, according to models interiorized in the course of different processes of socialization.” (Benson, 1999, p. 467, citing Bourdieu)

Therefore, “the *habitus*, the product of history, produces individual and collective practices, and hence, history” (Bourdieu, 1977/1972, p. 82). “[I]t is yesterday's man who inevitably predominates in us, since the present amounts to little compared with the long past in the course of which we were formed and from which we result. Yet, we do not sense this man of the past, because he is inveterate in us; he makes up the unconscious part of ourselves” (1977/1972, p. 79). All these *habitus* working together, “the orchestrations of *habitus* [...] the harmonization of agent's experiences and the continuous

reinforcement that each of them receives from the expression, individual or collective [...] cause practices and works to be immediately intelligible and foreseeable, and hence, taken for granted” (1977/1972, p. 80). “*Habitus* is the background of and resource for playing the social game. *Habitus* is interior to history, yet as a general environment for practice, pervades or saturates social processes” (Foster, 1986, p. 105).

Now, onto the second concept, the *field*. Society is not an homogeneous space where different *habitus* mix. Instead, it is

an ensemble of relatively autonomous spheres of play that cannot be collapsed under an overall societal logic [...]. [E]ach field prescribes its particular values and possesses its own regulative principles. These principles delimit a socially structured space in which agents struggle, depending on the position they occupy in that space, either to change or to preserve its boundaries and form (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 17).

Inside each of these fields, membership is restricted to those who are accepted into it and rules are applied. Competition and struggle for capital take place within these social spaces. “A field is simultaneously a space of conflict and competition [...]. In the course of these struggles, the very shape and divisions of the field become a central stake, because to alter the distribution and relative weight of forms of capital is tantamount to modifying the structure of the field. This gives any field a historical dynamism and malleability that avoids the inflexible determinism of classical structuralism” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 18).

Inside each field, its members struggle for *capital*, the third key notion. Bourdieu does not consider capital only as economic wealth, as a classical Marxist would do, but also 'cultural capital' (the cumulated knowledge, in the classical and elitist sense, or taste, linked to education, and skills), 'social capital' (the relationships in the community, seen as a valuable asset) and 'symbolic capital' (a capital based on the recognition by others) (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 46-58; 1984/1979 p. 291). More capital translates into more power and influence being exerted onto the field.

It is particularly interesting for this research to remember that, when some players feel that they are not at the field centre, they tend to take more risks and be less rigid, as Neveu notes:

At all the poles of the field, the establishment and outsiders continually

struggle. The younger and usually weaker outsiders – actors and titles – often use the same strategies as religious heretics. They claim to be the bearers of a return to the forgotten and true values of their field, buried under routine or deference. (2007, p. 337)

For the sake of this research, where journalism is directly involved with economy (it needs sales to survive) and politics, Bourdieu's idea of field dependence is relevant, using the notion of autonomy and heteronomy: in his approach, no field is absolutely autonomous, independent of others, but some of them are more dependent than others. In *The Field of Cultural Production*, (1993, pp. 37-39) Bourdieu explains that a field is more or less autonomous depending on how “completely [a field] fulfills its own logic as a field” (1993, p. 39); the more it depends on other fields (for instance, on financial success, and therefore on the economic field), the more heteronomous it is. Journalism, when confronted with the Net and its implications, is experiencing this struggle with other fields. Years before the Net became a phenomenon, Bourdieu wrote that “[t]he autonomy of a field of restricted production can be measured by its power to define its own criteria for the production and evaluation of its products” (1993, p. 115). These are the relations of power in society: inside fields and also among fields.

We have the *field* and the *habitus* of those within it, which produce a sense of a field of action and practice and is then elaborated by their creating what Bourdieu calls *illusio*, a concept that “suggests the idea of an investment in the stakes particular to a social field. *Illusio* is the subjective belief that the game is worth playing (and defending)” (Neveu, 2007, p. 338). Related to the *illusio*, is what Bourdieu calls *doxa* “the universe of the tacit presuppositions that we accept as the natives of certain society. But there is also a specific *doxa*, a system of presuppositions inherent in membership in a field [...]” (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 37). Ida Schulz clarifies something of great interest: “journalistic *doxa* is a set of professional beliefs which tend to appear as evident, natural and self-explanatory norms of journalistic practice” (Schulz, 2007, p. 194).

ii. BOURDIEU AND JOURNALISM

Bourdieu's theory is not accidentally suited to understanding and interpreting journalism; it is not only my intuition showing me its effectiveness; it is not only following the daily lives of journalists that you see that it adapts quite well to this theoretical framework. Instead, Bourdieu himself devoted much analysis to journalism –

“those who deal professionally in making things explicit and producing discourses” (2005, p. 37).

Based on two lectures given at the College of France, Bourdieu published *On television* (1998/1996), a book that “was written more as a contribution to a social debate than as a treatise on the sociology of journalism” (Neveu, 2007, p. 336). Here, Bourdieu “only hinted” (Benson and Neveu, 2005, p. 2) at a theory which had already been fully elaborated in *The Rules of Art* (1996/1992) and *The Field of Cultural Production* (1993) for the whole cultural production system. Journalists and their field are depicted in *On television* as a part of the wider field of power, dominated by other sections of it (economic and political fields) but being highly influential in its own right, and influencing other areas, such as the scientific one. He explicitly remarked that the influence of journalism derives from the structure of its field (Bourdieu, 1998/1996, p. 2) which “is best understood as a microcosm set within the macrocosm – it obeys its own laws, its own nomos” (Cited by Benson and Neveu, 2005, p. 5). In *On television* (1998/1996) Bourdieu describes some characteristics of the journalistic field (writing of France, at the end of the last century): he says that *Le Monde* used to be the professional reference, that now (in the mid-Nineties) it has lost that status due to the more popular television. “*Le Monde* used to lay the law in France in the world of print journalism” (1998/1996, p. 42). Bourdieu devotes a few pages of *On television* to describing specifically some internal dynamics that fit perfectly in the more general view of struggles in the cultural field, posited in previous works (1993 and 1996/1992). He quotes journalists being aware of their competitors' work, a “sort of game of mirrors reflecting one another [that] produces a formidable effect of mental closure”, “the hidden god of this universe who governs conduct and consciences” – something that I found in every newsroom I studied. “[T]his is an effect typical of the field: you do things for competitors that you think you are doing for consumers” (1998/1996, pp. 24-25). He also stresses some collateral notions that will be very helpful in my research:

The journalistic world is a divided one, full of conflict, competition and rivalries. That said, my analysis remains valid in that journalistic products are much more alike than generally thought. The most obvious differences, notably the political tendencies of the newspapers – [...] which [...] are becoming less and less evident – hide the profound similarities. These are traceable to the pressures imposed by sources and by a whole series of mechanisms, the most important of which is

competition. Free market economics holds that monopoly creates uniformity and competition produces diversity [...] but I observe that competition homogenizes [...] (Bourdieu, 1998/1996, p. 23)

An observation that fully applies to what was found in my investigation.

Bourdieu's theory of practice has had many followers among scholars, who have applied it to journalism. One of them, Rodney Benson, highlights three relevant qualities of Bourdieu's approach to journalism:

- (a) It brings a “theoretical and empirical bridge between the traditionally separated macro-societal level models of the news media [...]”.
- (b) In contrast to other studies, it takes into account not only senders (news gatherers and organisations), or readers, but the link between them.
- (c) And it stresses the processes of change inside the media field but also outside it, in relation to other fields (Benson, 1999, p. 463).

It is very interesting for the scope of this research that for Bourdieu, “[d]espite the inherent dynamism and conflict inside fields, most of this activity will tend to largely reproduce the structure of the field [...] unless and until it is also subject to pressures from neighboring fields” (Benson and Neveu, 2005, p. 6). This is precisely the situation I am investigating: with the arrival of the Net, that brings new pressures, opening the field and changing the traditional journalistic model. Benson and Nevey say “such external shocks could include [...] social and cultural movements and economic crisis [...]”. Transformations of the journalistic field matter, Bourdieu argues, precisely because of the central position of the journalistic field in the large field of power” (2005, p. 6).

Therefore, I will employ Bourdieu's theory as a framework with which to interpret the information collected in the field work. I will fit my ethnographic data in the map of a field that is struggling to preserve its present social role, where each medium in turn fights its corner for a more central place and where each player in each newsroom, carrying his *habitus*, his practical, accumulated knowledge of his profession, adopts what fits his understanding of the profession, in a very bleak and murky environment.

3. METHODOLOGY

Coming back to Jensen, “the theoretical framework” takes me to the methodology, “the overall design of the inquiry which serves to relate the constituent methods of data

gathering and data analysis, further justifying their selection and the interpretation of the data with reference to the theoretical frameworks employed” (1991, pp. 5-6); from understanding what we are going to analyse, to *how* we are going to find it, something by no means insignificant.

Researchers studying news production are acquainted with this challenge: in fact, after decades analysing news from a quantitative perspective, there took place in the late Sixties what was then called the *sociological turn*, when scholars left their tables, offices, content analysis and surveys, and went into the newsrooms, with the aim of watching, first hand, the journalistic environment (Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch, 2009, p. 6). This *turn* implied the introduction in communication research of a technique coming from anthropology,⁵⁸ which changed the way social scientists faced some complex realities: the ethnography. With it, they approached the particular social setting where news pieces are chosen, shaped and evaluated — the newsroom — and nuanced their approaches appropriately.⁵⁹ This method, as Cottle notes, served “to highlight the complexities and different levels of 'mediation' involved in processes of cultural production more generally”. “These studies [...] produced an invaluable sociological record and analysis of news production”. (2003, p. 13; 2007, p. 4)

i. QUALITATIVE OR QUANTITATIVE

All research employs methodologies that may be grouped into two categories: quantitative or qualitative. The first group “seems relatively methodologically one-dimensional” (Punch, 2005, p. 134). The second one “seek[s] to explain the world rather than measure it. [...] It is explanatory. Dealing primarily with words, qualitative research is holistic and blatantly interpretative” (Iorio, 2004, p. 6).

Many useful quantitative studies have been developed about online journalism and its

⁵⁸ Atkinson and Hammersley explain that “since the early twentieth century, ethnographic fieldwork has been central to anthropology. Indeed, carrying out such work, usually in a society very different from one’s own, became a rite of passage required for entry to the ‘tribe’ of anthropologists.” (2007/1983, p. 1)

⁵⁹ It was the case of James Buckalew's *News Elements and Selection by Television News* (1969); Malcolm Warner's *Decision Making in Network Television News* (1970) and *Organizational context and control of policy in the television newsroom* (1971); the praised Gaye Tuchman's *Making News by doing work* (1974) and *Making News; a Study in the Social Construction of Reality* (1978); Molotch and Lester's *News as Purposive Behavior* (1974) and *Accidental News: The Great Oil Spill as Local Occurrence and National Event* (1975) or Philip Schlesinger's *Putting 'reality' together. BBC News* (1987).

practices: about issues such as online credibility (Johnson and Kaye, 1998; Kiousis, 2006), how journalists are taking their gate-keeping role at online mainstream news media (Singer, 2006), how plurality of contents have changed on the online environment (Smyrnos, Marty and Rebillard, 2010); how readers of print and online news media perceive political issues with different emphases (Althaus and Tewksbury, 2000), content diversity (Carpenter, 2010) and how email and the World Wide Web have changed certain practices in science public relations (Duke, 2002). All of them were based on different forms of quantitative research.

Although these studies give us valuable and reliable data about specific facts, they lack the capacity to fully explain the causality of them, what has historically triggered them, how rooted they are, how they interlink with their environment and how their practitioners interpret them in accordance with their professional ideology. Furthermore, they are not able to respond to all these questions simultaneously, in a wider context, as this thesis demands.

Keith Punch, describing the particular features of each research model, stresses that their usefulness depends on what we are looking for. As far as we are certain about our questions, what structure data has, and how it will be analysed; the quantitative model can be very useful. “Everything is pre-specified, the research questions, the design and the data. It is all worked out in advance; a set of steps is laid down, and the researcher proceeds through those steps” (2005, pp. 22-23). “In quantitative research, measurement is conducted through numbers” (Barrie, 2002, p. 210). On the other hand, “we can envisage a project where very little structure is determined in advance, with a relatively open-ended and unstructured approach to the research questions, the design and the data. The strategy is that these will unfold as the study is carried out” (Punch, 2005, p. 23). This looser approach is the qualitative one. Miles and Huberman, describing the values and qualities of this methodology, say that

[q]ualitative data are sexy. They are a source of well grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes in identifiable local contexts. With qualitative data one can [...] see precisely which events led to which consequences and derive fruitful explanations. [...] [T]hey help researchers to get beyond initial conceptions and to generate or revise conceptual frameworks. (1994, p. 1)

Clearly ethnography is one of the key methodologies adopted and developed by the

qualitative tradition. Loïc Wacquant in *Ethnography* describes this methodology as

social research based on the close-up, on the ground observation of people and institutions in real time and space, in which the investigator embeds herself near (or within) the phenomenon so as to detect how and why agents on the scene act, think and feel the way they do. (Wacquant, 2003, p. 5)

Jane Singer, who devoted much of her scholarly experience to this kind of research, links ethnographies with the media field, by describing them as

an optimal method for exploring the nature and effects of this enormous cultural transition for journalists and journalism. It is ideally suited to understanding not just causes or effects, not just products and practices, but also the processes that underlie them, the perceptions that drive and are driven by them (2008, p. 170).

Ethnography and newsrooms, journalism, press and, in general the media, seem to go together so well because the former, as a social science methodology, can help us to scrutinise specifically four fields, as Boyer and Hannerz (2006) detect, areas where scholars have many questions, and that are relevant also for this investigation:

- (a) “the relationship of media professionalism to social mediation”
- (b) “the analytic and ethnographic potentials of reflexive social science”, reflexivity that is quite often seen in the journalistic world;
- (c) “contemporary transformations of political communication and knowledge” from what is happening in the communications world, with new actors, new practices and even new languages in a wide sense; and
- (d) “the emergence of broader zones and scales of the translocal social experience” that are very complex and, moreover, in permanent evolution and transformation.

These questions are not, in our opinion, the limits of what we can learn from the worlds of journalism, but rather serve as useful points of conceptual departure that have emerged from the ethnography of journalism itself (Boyer and Hannerz, 2006; p. 7).

Simon Cottle (2003), referring to news media, including news-producers, explains which in his opinion is the best suited method for researching their practices: “[the] ethnographic approach often proves invaluable as a corrective to speculative and

abstract theory and the generalising claims to which this can give rise” (2003, p. 4). With these credentials, it should not be a surprise that since the turn of the century, “a second wave” (Paterson, 2008, p. 3) of scholars adopted the ethnographic approach to study again the characteristics of online journalism. An observational research that “is typically conducted in conjunction with interviewing” (2008, p. 5).⁶⁰ Paterson nails it down in these terms:

Only ethnographic methodologies derived from anthropological and sociological traditions can come close to providing an adequate description of the culture and practice of media production and the mind-set of media producers (Paterson, 2008, p. 2).

4. ANALYTICAL RESOURCES

Despite being a flexible and complex methodology, ethnography does not automatically mean being successful, achieving the objectives, describing and understanding what is in front of us, in media environments. Exploiting all the methodology's potential requires additional measures. Keith Punch (2005) explains some basic requirements that the ethnographical study should follow rigorously, step by step: researchers must design the investigation adapting the methodology to their questions; then the sampling ought to be carried out carefully: “we cannot study everyone everywhere doing everything” (Punch, 2005, p. 187). Data have to be collected using the most appropriate methods: interviews, observation (structured and unstructured) and triangulating, contrasting data with documentation when mandatory. A careful selection and use of the “analytical apparatus or methods (the concrete operations of inquiry, including the collecting, registering and categorizing of data),” as Jensen stated, is needed (1991, pp. 5-6).

In order to obtain valid results, I will follow Le Compte and Goetz, who, as early as 1982, reminded us what an ethnographic study demands: a clear formulation of problems, an identification of the nature of goals and a transparent application of results. By ‘formulation of problems,’ Le Compte and Goetz mean that a previous idea about

⁶⁰ These ethnographies may be part of this second wave (to mention a few): David Domingo, about four Spanish media (2006); Boczkowski in Argentina (2010); Paulussen in the Netherlands (2004); Karreman and Alvesson in Sweden (2001); Machin (2002) in Spain; Cottle and Ashton (1999) with a particular adoption of a new organization at the BBC; Wahl-Jorgensen (2002) or Georgina Born about the BBC (2005) in the UK or Baisnée and Marchetti in France (2006).

the subject of the research is needed.⁶¹ In this case, I was very aware about the traditional journalistic values and practices and the challenges that the Internet raises in the newsroom, against those well rooted routines and beliefs; and had a rough idea about its relationships, links and nature is needed, which again, in this case, relates closely to Bourdieu's ideas about how journalism operates as a field, where its members definitely value what their colleagues do, sometimes even more so than what their sources or readers demand.

Social scientists consider ethnography a risky methodology: its data is subtle, dependent on human interpretation and flexible. For Atkinson and Hammersley, what we understand as analysis of data, a very delimited moment in the quantitative methodology, “is not a distinct stage of the [ethnographical] research. In many ways, it begins in the pre-fieldwork phase, in the formulation and clarification of research problems, and continues through to the process of writing reports, articles, and books” (2007/1983, p. 158).

What Atkinson and Hammersley say has been attributed to the fact that studies about human behaviours need to go “beyond mere fact and surface appearances [...] and present detail, context, emotion and the webs of social relationships that join persons to one another”, “[inserting] history into experience [and] establish[ing] the significance of an experience, or the sequence of events for the person or persons in question” (Denzin, 1989, p. 83). This sort of understanding of complex social environments, human behaviours and deciphering meanings is what Denzin calls “thick description”, a concept first coined and explored by Clifford Geertz (1973)⁶². Later, Holloway defined this analytical approach as aiming “to give readers a sense of the emotions, thoughts and perceptions that research participants experience. It deals not only with the meaning and interpretations of people in a culture but also with their intentions. 'Thick description' builds up a clear picture of the individuals and groups in the context of their culture and the setting in which they live” (Holloway, 1997, p. 154).

Atkinson and Hammersley (2007/1983) warn us that ethnographies do not always end

⁶¹ Atkinson and Hammersley remind us that it is quite usual, as in my case, that researchers had a previous knowledge of settings where they will develop their investigation. “It is also common for research to be stimulated by previous experience in temporary or permanent jobs” (ibid, 2007/1983, p. 24).

⁶² He takes the term from Gilbert Ryle (1971), who employed it in 1949 to describe intellectual work. Geertz (1973, p. 6) describe vividly how subtle and complex the interpretation of a simple wink could be.

up with theories or new meta-theories; sometimes the outcome is a clarifying description of an activity, process or environment, very often with the intention of using it to develop new theorisations of over arching understandings of a particular formation, as is this research's case.

I developed this research with Miles and Huberman's warnings about this type of work in mind (1994, pp. 10-14):

- (a) data reduction that happens in each step of this work and means that the author is always choosing, deleting, selecting and discriminating information,
- (b) data display that is needed to evaluate and organise the work and that is under material pressures, and
- (c) drawing and verifying conclusions, a subtle process that means getting conclusions from different areas, at different moments, sometimes in an unexpected way.

Ethnography is a methodology that is unique for the goals that Willis and Trondman (2000, pp. 7-11) describe in four points: (a) studies different fields recognising the role of theory as a pre-cursor, as a medium or as an outcome; (b) is based on culture, understood in a wide sense, it is sensible to this field, a “the play of symbolic powers”, “meaning-making” and, of course, “emergent cultures and cultural forms”; (c) has a critical focus, explaining where power lies, how human practices relate to the social environment and culture and (d) shows an interest in cultural policy, in putting the social process in relation to public spheres.

i. VALIDITY

For years, scholars applying an ethnographical methodology devoted efforts to justifying how their research could be scientific and demonstrating its rigour and quality. Let me explain how knowledge is created and validated in this case.

Pierre Bourdieu, who will give me the main theoretical tools to interpret my study, worked in two lines: first, principally until the early Seventies and mostly with Jean-Claude Passeron, he developed in-depth studies and surveys (heirs in his native region, Bearn; higher education in France or peasants in Kabila, Algeria, are some examples) that gave him the material to build a theory of society, to extract lessons and patterns of behaviour that can be structured. Later, roughly from the late Seventies onwards, he

used these theoretical tools, constructed step by step from this field research, to analyse different groups and behaviours, now moving away from the proper field, from the real world. This approach, where a theory already constructed is checked against a specific social group, clearly corresponds to journalism. In *On television* (Bourdieu, 1998/1996), Bourdieu applied his concepts to interpret and understand what happens in the real journalistic world (Marqués, 2006, pp. 73-74).

From my field work, the evidences seen, described and collected in this research, considering Bourdieu's concepts as a code to find structured behaviours, I will interpret what they mean, how they can be read, in which context they should be understood and deciphered and why they relate to other players involved and the values and social structures involved. Those theories already hypothesised will allow me to find the meaning and the intentions of these facts that lie behind appearances, and how they fit into the structures of the field where journalists perform their role. From this reconfigured framework, I will be able to describe new emerging rules and the outcome of new working patterns, of new demands, of a rebalanced landscape and new applications of Bourdieu's general theories to new specific environments and social sets, created around this new technology. These narratives – these 'thick descriptions' – will suggest how online journalism will develop in the future, how and why the new journalism is evolving, or eventually positing, as a conclusion, nuancing Bourdieu's understanding of the field of journalism in particular in new ways. From this reconfiguration of players' roles, values and practices, I will extract new rules, feeding again the circular processes – those that check and explain, and then explain and check how social groups work. These will be the conclusions I will reach, which will be described in chapters IV, V, VI and VII and summarised in chapter VIII, taking into account this long list of precautions and advice that will ensure a rigorous outcome.

ii. RESEARCHING TOOLS

Ethnography “can *seem* deceptively simple in contrast, for example, with the pursuit of quantitative research. It may appear to require only that one ‘act naturally’, putting aside any methodological rules and constraints” (my italics; Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007/1983, p. 20). It is not so easy however: the research tools must fulfill their function, the information about practices and beliefs has to emerge free of bias, uncontaminated. The accuracy of information relies on the researcher's ability to detect

what is not fitting the picture and by crossing information with other sources from the same group. It must be also be ascertained what tools are to be used, as some of them are more prone to misinterpretation or, worse, misrepresentation.

Having worked as a journalist for ten years, since 1982 to 1992 to be precise, I am aware of the fact that I could have been biased (in my perception and position) towards the profession. However, when I later started working as a press officer, I was confronted with journalists, as I had to be in contact with citizens, through their mediation. That gave me a very different perspective indeed. At the time of this research I was not involved in journalist struggles with the Net, not in the conflicts about their social role. In addition, having taught at the University since 2005, has allowed me to develop a distant and balanced opinion by which I have been able to understand a broader range of approaches and overcome my prejudices.

Anyway, I followed Bourdieu's advice⁶³ about the objectivity of the author and the unavoidable presence of subjectivism (1996, p. 17-20): "Rigour [...] lies in the permanent control of the point of view, which is continually affirmed in the details of the writing" (1996, p. 33).⁶⁴

I have employed four main tools: personal interviews, direct observation, participant observation and content analysis⁶⁵ (for details about the tools and its usage, see Appendix 2).

(a) Personal interviews⁶⁶

I have conducted 31 interviews for this research, plus many other shorter, more informal contacts on the run, which were very useful for contrasting information, detecting weak points, confirming details, preparing and setting the tone for new interviews and

⁶³ Bourdieu was always linked with and committed to field work, sometimes with quantitative methods, sometimes with qualitative, sometimes with a combination of both. (Wacquant, 2004).

⁶⁴ In this sense, the particular technique applied to interact with journalists has to be adapted to the situation that allows the researcher to get to the information, to the real situation where the analysed team live in. I have used a participant observation technique in every news medium (sometimes more than once) plus an array of other tools such as interviews, triangulation and contrasting with content analysis.

⁶⁵ Many authors analyse in detail potential hurdles in this sort of work. For instance, settings (which in the case of news media, are concentrated in a physical place, the newsroom) (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007/1983, p. 31); the integration of the researcher in the medium (in my case, being a former journalist, being the same age as most of them, about 50, used to their language, formerly related with them) (ibid, p. 66) and how to select the right information to analyse and not to get flooded in valueless data (ibid, p. 37).

⁶⁶ I treat in this category, as interviews, those pre-arranged meetings with journalists, where they had been fully informed of my intentions, their giving information to be recorded and me taking full notes of every comment. These meetings were never shorter than an hour long, in a private space, with no interruptions. Otherwise, I consider the encounter as an informal contact.

understanding what lay behind some comments. I must stress the importance of these brief contacts – in the lift, while waiting for someone, at the canteen, by phone or email – especially when it came to triangulating particular information about what could be expected from my interviewees, from their access to decision-making, etcetera.

I had read some handbooks about the interviewing technique, but the best lesson was what I had already learnt when working as a journalist: never ask delicate questions at the beginning, leave time for the interviewee to relax, feel comfortable, conducting him or her to the critical points slowly and meanderingly. Even, when possible, delaying the matters that may cause conflict, or letting them freely emerge. Usually, as a strategy for helping them get used to the situation, I began the interviews talking about my past experience as a journalist and how I, at a distance from the journalistic field, had seen the arrival of the Internet, as well as general comments about media strategies (eg. rivalry among media companies is an excellent theme to break barriers).

I felt I was in trouble during my first interviews at *El País* because the staff had just been informed that there would soon be many redundancies made at the company. As a result, they tended not to be frank with me. But after two days, with the help of a journalist who was not working at the newsroom but in public relations for the company, I was able to finally break the wall of silence and, using their testimonies as a hook for more interviews, I reached my goal.

Interviewees were selected following their relevance as representatives of a particular type of work: at every newsroom I interviewed editors, subeditors, reporters, controllers, in order to cover every professional category, rather than interviewing everybody within the same group (see Appendix 2, for details). I reproduced the same scheme at every newsroom, as far those categories were available.

The questionnaires were formulated in two parts: on the one hand, a list of common questions that were asked to all my interviewees, which covered matters related to each stage of the production chain: collection of stories, links with sources, original reporting, multimediality, relation with readers or interactivity; how the new reality and its social position was valued; and how they perceived their competitor's stance. The second group of questions was not prepared: I relegated the matters they seemed not to consider as relevant and allowed the interview to be lead to points that I perceived were valuable for my interviewee. As a result, all of them were asked about the same matters,

but also all of them could bring up what they felt was more relevant. And, as it will be seen, the distance between what concerns some of these newsrooms confirmed that my approach was the right one.

(b) Direct Observation. My second tool was direct observation. I spent four weeks in total watching the work that was being carried out in the four newsrooms. From a total of about 200 hours, 46 of them were fully spent on formal observation sessions of the newsrooms. I consider a full observation session those moments when journalists had been informed about my work and I was recording everything that I was seeing or hearing. There were many more moments with more relaxed criteria which could be included in this category. I have to stress that being fluent in the usage of journalistic jargon, being well used to its practices, and using shorthand to take notes, I fully profited from my time with them, using my free time in the hotel to update my work, check the news agenda and contrast the competitors' web sites. During those days I explored their routines and practices, observed their work online, their colleagues' work on the same topics, their shifts, telephone calls and routines, in order to gain an understanding of their practices that would enable me to ask the right questions. In this environment, asking an absurd question may have meant the researcher being dismissed as an amateur who does not understand the basics of their work.

(c) Participant Observation. I spent about a day in each newsroom mingled with a single team of journalists, watching them as they worked: at *El País* I spent a full working shift; at *Diario de Mallorca* I had two sessions on different days and in different areas, of about twelve hours in total; at *Efe* I spent less time in each of the three separate sessions with three different teams but altogether they took about fifteen hours. Finally, at *El Mundo* I had two eight and three hour sessions with two different teams, the breaking-news and multimedia sections.⁶⁷ Each session required hours of prior preparation, in order to be familiar with their tasks and methods, which I encountered while in the newsrooms. These sessions were my introductory tool to get in touch with the newsroom at every place, which allowed me to see them, to hear what they were

⁶⁷ Much information (occasionally more important) emerged spontaneously. As an example: one morning I had to wait for the *El Mundo* online's editor-in-chief to be free; he was solving a conflict with other areas, but I was allowed to be in his office, hearing all his calls, his orders and concerns. At *El País*, I was allowed to hear and use the content of their informal conversations with colleagues, which sometimes were key to understand their ideas and beliefs. At *Efe*, Javier Lascrain, the coordinator of National news allowed me to look through the press releases they were using for their plans which gave me valuable information about the public relations pressure on the newsroom.

concerned about, to see who was in charge who was able to take decisions and who was a natural leader. Provided that I remained silent, after two out of three hours, they behaved as if I was not there, creating an atmosphere that was highly effective for my research; moreover, I was already immersed in the culture of these newsrooms and was able to establish rapport with my contacts relatively rapidly which enabled me to elicit rich qualitative material from the short, intensive periods of what was, in some respects, peer observation.⁶⁸

Additionally, I developed another less formal kind of observation:

(d) Content analysis. For *Diario de Mallorca*, I studied all published content on its front page for weeks, as well as its main local competitors (see Appendix 1), to check how far they followed their own criteria about selection of news, for further triangulation. This will be commented on in due course.

Moreover, every evening, during my days in the field, I checked the online product and their competitor's to contrast their claims with the end results, the discrepancies of which I later confronted them with.

The draw of the experiences of journalists in relation to the Internet emerges from the intersection of their narratives, the facts seen and recorded in the participant observation sessions, the criss-cross of information amongst actors and my application of Bourdieu's concepts for interpreting and understanding why, in particular social scenarios one or another attitude is stated or rejected; what the most intimate concerns of my actors are when performing their roles, their professional lives within the map of their field, which is also part of a wider social picture. These techniques permitted an analysis of embodied practices (part of what Bourdieu calls *habitus*, those apparently free acts which are in the end products of structuralism) and that which deviates from what the field expects.⁶⁹ Some interviews do collide with practices (content analysis is a tool to verify claims) and some of them do not live up to their promises.

⁶⁸ This study of 200 hours plus 31 interviews is slightly shorter than average ethnographies of this kind (two months and 35 interviews for Møller-Hartley, 2013, p. 3; three visits and 39 interviews to 23 people by Nikki Usher, 2012, pp. 1902-1903; 300 hours of observation and 60 interviews for Anderson, 2011b, p. 551; six weeks, 32 interviews by Robinson, 2010, p. 129, or three days per newsroom by Domingo, 2006, pp. 221-224), but given my previous knowledge of the profession and its jargon, I was able to engage with them almost instantly.

⁶⁹ Bourdieu describes this rooted practice in these terms: "native membership of a field implies a feel for the game in the sense of a capacity for practical anticipation of the 'upcoming' future contained in the present, everything that takes place in it seems sensible: full of sense and objectively directed in a judicious direction" (1990/1980, p.66)

Weeks before I began my field work, I read Pujik's paper (2008) in which he raises the problem of accessing to newsrooms (he could not carry out his field work in Norway, at the most important public television station). I had not foreseen a situation like his, that could fatally derail my work. Following this I rushed to make my first contacts, sometimes directly, sometimes using friends in common, but my experience was as smooth as it could have been. I easily found out who was the gatekeeper in each case, and they gave me as much time as I needed, with no restrictions, as far as I kept my research under the stated topic. I knew some of my contacts from my previous experience as a journalist, but it did not seem to influence their decision to accept my presence in the newsroom. Of course, I have to suppose that my speech patterns are still accustomed to their jargon and I updated the news-agenda every day in order to fully understand their concerns⁷⁰. I have acquaintances in these four newsrooms and mentioning them made things much easier, dissipating any doubts about the nature of my intentions and scope. Employing Bourdieu's terms, I would say that they treated me as if I were part of their field, as one of them. After a while, they had agreed upon a list of people, representatives of different levels of responsibility, who were happy to be interviewed. All in all, sharing a basic knowledge about journalistic values and experiences definitely gave me a huge advantage and a clearance to arrive at my objective faster. They also sponsored my work at the same time that they allowed me to choose those who I could talk to or the sections in which I could better observe the daily work.

During my stay at *Diario de Mallorca* I realised how useful my shorthand skills would be: using recording equipment is very stressful for those talking to a researcher; they may feel that what is said could be published somewhere at some point and be perceived as a risk. But taking notes as they do, and doing it in shorthand, which means they do not need to repeat their words, allowed me to be as fast as events flew through their screens, phones and keyboards. It took me time to value this technique as an asset in this particular experience.

⁷⁰ Typically, the initial attitude of journalists to me was one of caution, then they consented to talking but, if my first questions were said in their language, demonstrating that I knew their jargon and was not out of place, they opened up more and more. A mistake about genres, practices or internally accepted rules, I guess, would make them less friendly.

5. THE SUBJECT OF THE RESEARCH

Following Jensen (1991, pp. 5-6), an investigation has to have a clear description of “the object of the analysis”, which means a precise description of what, when, where and how the research was developed. The present thesis is an investigation about the effects of the Internet on the journalistic practice specifically in four archetypes of news-outlets in Spain.

i. WHY SPAIN

Most scholars stress that an overwhelming number of studies about online journalism are being done in the United States (Domingo, 2008b, p. 15; Curran and Park, 2000, pp. 2-4). A much more limited number of investigations take place in northern European countries while the rest of the world is clearly understudied. For this reason, the emerging map of research into online journalism is obviously biased to an American perspective.⁷¹ As proof that things are more complex than just what the American studies show, let me repeat that Hallin and Mancini (2004) have described three quite different operating media models just in Europe, a level of diversity that one would expect to swell in complexity if the study included more continents. Although most research conclusions would be applicable to more than one country and culture, it is a highly risky operation, because these translations are not automatic and factors that usually converge in one context at a certain moment are not necessarily to be found elsewhere, at least in the same sequence. Thorsten Quandt says that

[m]any visions of a “new” (online) journalism have no empirical basis whatsoever, and research findings from the journalism context of one country cannot be easily transferred to other cultural and national contexts. What is true for American online journalism, for example, need not to be true for German online journalism (2008, p. 78).

Other authors recommend a wider vision of the online news media situation. Michlestein and Boczkowski, who analysed the disparities in the scholarship of this area, conclude by suggesting that

⁷¹ Curran laments that “the academic globalization boom is not even breaking new ground in the sense of identifying a new era of research. [This work] is merely a continuation of a tradition [...]” based in America and, to a less degree, other Western countries. (2002, pp. 166-167)

[a] comparative perspective [...] could strengthen knowledge about online news production by contrasting practice and professional matters across countries and regions of the world. The review section of this article shows that studies of these matters have largely been about organizations and workers located in the USA. (2009, p. 577).

In this sense, the Spanish speaking journalistic world is significant enough to be studied on its own merits: Spanish is the second most important language in the Western world (Internet World Stat, 2011a), and the leading Spanish online news medium, *elmundo.es*, with more than 30 million monthly only users (OJD, 2011), ranks just behind the *New York Times* (61.9 million for all its brands); the *British Mail* (39 million), the *Huffington Post* (38 million); the *Tribune Group* (34 million), and is slightly ahead of the fifth English speaking news medium, *The Guardian* (Mediaweek, 2011).

These figures can be explained by the fact that Spain is a relatively large country, at least in European terms, but it is much more significant when considered as part of the Spanish speaking community, employing the third largest language in the world and on the Net, just behind English and Cantonese Chinese.⁷²

I have chosen to analyse four newsrooms that could give me a broad view of the field in Spain. They all share some characteristics: they all were thriving with the traditional journalistic model; they all are deeply rooted in their professional model, and all of them were the reference in their level (Bourdieu, 1998/1996, pp. 24-26).

In order to analyse them under Bourdieu's sociological theory, every medium could be valuable as far as everyone is part of the field, but those who are 'references' are better suited to show the path to the rest of the field. In this sense, I chose *Efe*, the biggest Spanish news-producing team, whose members are reckoned as the élite of the profession; the two biggest and most influential print media, *El País* and *El Mundo*, which still today are followed by the rest of the field, and finally, an archetype of regional press, very influential in its area, although of less importance in national terms, *Diario de Mallorca*.

ii. THE SPANISH MEDIA MARKET

Spain did not have an industrial revolution until late in the 20th Century. With most of

⁷² The Internet World Stats (2011), a private organisation that studies and keep a record of general data about the Net, says that in June, 2010, English was the mother tongue for 536 million Internet users; Chinese for 444 million and Spanish for 153 million. The forth was Japanese, and the fifth Portuguese.

the population having low standards of life, poor urbanisation and no public education until the Thirties, Spain was a rural and underdeveloped country with high levels of illiteracy. All these reasons contributed to the fact that newspapers were traditionally read less than in the rest of Europe (Sánchez-Aranda & Barrera, 2003). With this situation,

[a]t the beginning of the twentieth century, the Spanish press showed a notable underdevelopment compared with France, Great Britain and the United States. Whereas in those countries some newspapers enjoyed a circulation in excess of one million copies, in Spain the principal newspapers barely sold more than 100,000 (2003, p. 490).

In those years, some newspaper editors took efforts to introduce in Spain the sort of journalism that was being developed in the United States. In one case, a team of journalists was sent overseas in order to learn and import those practices (Sánchez-Aranda & Barrera, 2003, p. 492; Cepeda, 1987, p. 251), but the market was too small, full of unstable partisan newspapers, unable to reach a non-existent readership.⁷³ In the late Thirties an internal civil war destroyed any remnant hope of levelling up to the average European literacy rate for decades.⁷⁴ After the war, a fascist and ultra-Catholic dictatorship, under general Francisco Franco, an army official, controlled Spain until 1975, using the press mostly as a tool for political indoctrination and propaganda. Despite being under strict political surveillance, a news media system was developed in the country, consisting of a national press based in Madrid, plus a wider net of regional newspapers, at least one – often two – in each province. By the end of the regime, between 1975 and 1984, the total circulation of the Spanish print press (103 newspapers) was about 3 million copies⁷⁵ (Sinova, 1986, pp. 144-145). When the democracy arrived, the radio, that during the Franco's years had been mainly public⁷⁶ and always controlled by the state, was partially liberalised, reaching almost half of the

⁷³ 32 newspapers were printed in Madrid in 1920, most of them small and amateur. (Sánchez-Aranda and Barrera, 2003)

⁷⁴ As a result of the war and very poor post war situation, “the same number of daily newspapers were being sold in 1980 as in 1932”. (Gunter, Montero and Wert, 1999, p. 17)

⁷⁵ Sinova (1986) mentions figures coming from the audit office: just 66 newspapers were audited at the time, and their total aggregated circulation was 2.463.381 copies. The difference is worked out using estimations.

⁷⁶ There was a group of publicly owned stations (*Radio Nacional de España*, *Radio Juventud* and *Radio Cadena Española*) plus a chain owned by the Catholic Church (*Radio Popular*) and a privately owned network, which did not challenge the Government and were focused mainly on entertainment and music (*Cadena Ser*). (Bonet, 2005, p. 64)

Spanish population and becoming a significant and popular mass news medium (pp. 151-152). The television, which had been created during the dictatorship, was under direct government management until the end of the regime at which point it reached the 86 per cent of the population. The television, comprising just two channels, was still under state monopoly until the Nineties, when some regional public stations and later two national private ones were given the licence to broadcast (Barrera, 2005, p. 169).

The latest figures for 2010/11 confirm that television reaches 88.4% of the population, followed by radio (57.7%), magazines (49.8%), newspapers (37.6%) and the Internet (41.5%) (AIMC, 2011, n.p.). Added to the fact that, historically, readership has always been low in Spain, most recent figures show that the Spanish print press, as is the case in most European countries, is losing readers at least on their traditional formats. This is the latest audited report about circulation (OJD, 2012) for most leading newspapers, including *El País*, *El Mundo* and *Diario de Mallorca*, the objects of this study:

Newspaper (zone of circulation)	2007	2011	Variation
<i>El País</i> (Madrid and Spain)	440159	365117	-17.04%
<i>El Mundo</i> (Madrid and Spain)	330501	252770	-23.51%
<i>Abc</i> (Madrid and Spain)	218863	221351	1.13%
<i>La Vanguardia</i> (Barcelona and Catalonia)	201586	190033	-5.73%
<i>El Periódico</i> (Barcelona and Catalonia)	169897	119374	-29.73%
<i>La Razón</i> (Madrid and Spain)	153688	103789	-22.91%
<i>El Correo</i> (Bilbao and Basque Country)	119920	97313	-18.85%
<i>La Voz de Galicia</i> (Galicia)	105653	91131	-13.74%
<i>Diario de Mallorca</i> (Majorca)	22753	19145	-15.85%

Online news media developed in Spain from the mid-Nineties onwards. After an experimental and introductory period, the Internet was regularly used by 30 per cent of the Spanish population by 2005 (less than the European average, but with similar trends) (Caminos, Marín and Armentia, 2007, n.p.), and 43 per cent by May, 2011 (AIMC, 2011). Online news media are, also in Spain, overwhelmingly under the traditional mainstream media ownership.⁷⁷ This is the ranking from Alexia, cited by Caminos, Marín and Armentia (2007) (Data as in 2006)⁷⁸:

⁷⁷ Just 21 per cent of 1274 online media detected in a study in 2005 in Spain were born for the Net. The rest already existed with other formats. (Almirón, 2006a, p. 10)

⁷⁸ News media in Spain have been audited under different rules, so comparisons are not reliable. On 7th January 2012 the Alexa ranking showed *Marca.com* 313th, *Elpais.com*, 370th and *Elmundo.es*, 386th. (Alexa, 2012)

		Post			Post			Post
1	<i>El Mundo</i>	207	7	<i>Abc</i>	2280	13	<i>Voz de Galicia</i>	5253
2	<i>El País</i>	563	8	<i>20 minutos</i>	2830	14	<i>Cinco Días</i>	5482
3	<i>Marca</i>	572	9	<i>Diariovasco</i>	3051	15	<i>Expansión</i>	6239
4	<i>As</i>	845	10	<i>Confidencial</i>	3309	16	<i>Correo</i>	10129
5	<i>Libertad Dig</i>	1041	11	<i>Periodico</i>	3339	17	<i>Verdad</i>	10432
6	<i>Sport</i>	2136	12	<i>La Razón</i>	4857	18	<i>Estrella</i>	12074

All these newspapers, and most broadcast media, plus the new online sites, belong to a reduced number of media conglomerates, which have been building their control of Spanish public communications since the end of the dictatorship, in 1975. Measured by international standards these groups are⁷⁹ small, but in the Spanish speaking world (Spain and Latin America) they are leaders.⁸⁰

Groups	Turnover (2002/2010 Milion euros) ⁸¹	Employees 2002/2010	Comments ⁸²
PRISA	1162/ 2822	9158/ 13885	<i>El País</i> (first newspaper in Spain), <i>As</i> , <i>Cinco Días</i> , <i>Ser</i> (first chain of radios in Spain), Santillana, one of the biggest book publishers, and many newspapers and radios in Latin America, and as many online media as print. All the group sold recently to Liberty Holdings, an American fund.
Sogecable	975	1591	<i>Cuatro</i> (free terrestrial television) and <i>Canal +</i> (pay satellite channels). Later merged with Prisa and now sold to <i>Tele 5</i> , part of Mediaset, Berlusconi's media group.
Planeta	920/ n.a.	2500/ n.a.	Who own <i>La Razón</i> in Madrid, <i>Avui</i> in Barcelona, the biggest book publisher in Spanish, and now <i>Onda Cero</i> (radio) and <i>Antena 3</i> Television.
TVE	791/ n.a.	9140/ n.a.	Public radio and television broadcasting company.
<i>Antena 3</i> ⁸³	637/ n.a.	1900/ n.a.	Private television stations, now part of Planeta
<i>Tele 5</i>	633/ n.a.	721/ n.a.	Private television station, leader in readership figures, part of Mediaset, the Berlusconi's media group. It has bought <i>Cuatro</i> and other parts of the PRISA television interests.
Vocento	625/ 717	3526/ 4003	First regional newspaper group (<i>El Correo</i> and <i>Abc</i> amongst them), with interests in radio and television (a minority stake in <i>Tele 5</i>).
Zeta	380/ n.a.	2500/ n.a.	A regional newspapers group (<i>El periódico</i>).
Godó	238/ n.a.	1425/ n.a.	A mostly Catalan regional newspapers group, owning also radio and television stations.
Prensa	235/ n.a.	1900/ n.a.	The second regional newspapers group, with small assets in radio and

⁷⁹ Data from Gámir (2005, p. 196), Vocento (2011), PRISA (2010) and RCS Mediagroup (2011)

⁸⁰ Although not in Spanish, Brazilian media are linked to the rest of South America.

⁸¹ In bold, 2010 data. Most groups have changed, so no comparison should be made.

⁸² Most media conglomerates in Spain are not publicly traded, so they do not publish financial statements.

⁸³ *Antena 3* absorbed the television arm of Mediapro at the end of 2011.

Ibérica	n.a.	n.a.	television.
Recoletos	224	1580	Business press, some magazines and television stations. Sold by Pearson, a British media group, to <i>El Mundo</i> .
Mediapro ⁸⁴	n.a.	n.a.	A national television station, a national newspaper, and many television producing companies.
Unidad Editorial	n.a. ⁸⁵ / 531	n.a./ 2003	<i>El Mundo</i> , <i>Marca</i> and <i>Expansión</i> , plus some magazines and radio stations. The group is owned by RSC, an Italian media group that includes the publisher Rizzoli, the Italian best-selling newspaper, <i>Corriere de la Sera</i> and other media.

These groups control the Spanish media market, where there is almost no external presence (Gámir, 2005).

In Spain, as in other South European countries, the role of news media and their evolution cannot be fully understood without a study of its connections with the political elite (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). Most groups have developed relations with political parties in order to get television and radio grants or a bigger share of public advertisements for their media.⁸⁶ This patronage is very common in Spain, as Arboledas (2009) confirms after an investigation in four regions, under different political parties' control. Sanders and Canel reveal that:

Media companies are powerful but they work in an environment in which a great deal of power is vested in government. [...] The government has the power to award broadcast licences. However, unlike other countries, there is a pattern of behaviour which suggests that Spanish governments have used this power to favour those who are ideologically sympathetic to them (2004, pp. 201-202).

News media also rely on their political contacts to get a very important source of income, allocated by regional and central governments (Sanders & Canel, 2004). Therefore,

Partisan press coverage was and is the norm in Spain. *El País* is known for its support of the Socialist Party (PSOE); *ABC* is the newspaper of conservative, monarchical Spain and *El Mundo* has been described by the former *Guardian* editor, Peter Preston, as 'a turn over the stones, "kick shit" paper'. *La Razón* is a conservative, Popular Party-supporting paper (2004, p. 199).

For the sake of a better explanation of the recent media crisis in Spain, I have to stress

⁸⁴ The television arm of Mediapro integrated *Antena 3* in the end of 2011.

⁸⁵ Data for 2002 is not available.

⁸⁶ In Spain there have been no subsidies to any news media since 1988 (Martín, 2003, p. 203)

that the general crisis affecting this country has translated into a 50 per cent shrinkage in the ads budget from 2007 to 2011, when this field work was done. This table summarises the evolution in recent years as far public data is available (Zenitmedia, 2011, p. 36).

Ads sales in Spain by platform (in million euros)							
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Share %	2009/2007
Television	2951	3188	3469	3082	2368	42.1	-31.7
Newspapers	1666	1791	1894	1508	1174	20.9	-38
Sundays	119	123	134	104	69	1.2	-48
Radio	610	637	678	642	537	9.6	-20.8
Internet	162	30	482	610	654	11.6	35.7

iii. WHICH SPANISH NEWS MEDIA

As has been mentioned previously, this research investigates four Spanish news media: *Diario de Mallorca*, *Efe*, *El Mundo* and *El País*. I studied their relationship with the Net, its adoption, how it is changing their routines and practices and how journalists value this process from their professional point of view, and which is their understanding of their new online role. I carried out this work at their newsrooms, where they share their traditional ideas and concepts about the new technology and its language. I wanted to localize and describe what Bourdieu called the “rules of the game”, particularly in relation with the new environment (Benson, 1999, pp. 468-469).

The four selected news media have the following characteristics⁸⁷:

Diario de Mallorca.

Spain has a dense net of regional newspapers, all of them quite influential in their own areas and with the highest share of readers in their regions (Fernández Obregón, 1998, n.p.). Most are part of larger regional media groups amalgamated in the last 25 years: Vocento and Prensa Ibérica (the latter, owner of *Diario de Mallorca*) who are, by far, the most important (ibid, n.p.). As a general rule, in almost every Spanish region, there are

⁸⁷ A detailed and full description of each of them can be found at the introduction of the chapter where they are studied.

at least one, and usually two, newspapers. As in *Diario de Mallorca's* case, most newspapers have been very profitable businesses; and used to be family-owned until late Seventies or Eighties.⁸⁸ Some scholars say that, in general, they acted in the same way when confronted with the Internet: first they rushed to open a web site with almost no content; later they began publishing only *shovelware* from their print edition (in many cases, they still do this) and today they have added news-wires (Armentia Vizuite, 2005). Most of them have two newsrooms: the bigger one for the print edition and a very small team, less well paid and usually less experienced, for the online version that, in some cases, is managed from a central office elsewhere (López and Mellado, 2006). *Diario de Mallorca* could be considered an example of this model of regional press.

Efe.

Efe is the biggest Spanish news agency and also the biggest in the Spanish language, with a strong presence in Latin America, offices in more than 100 countries and a team of about 1000 journalists. *Efe* is one of the Spanish news media that has a strong collective sense of their public responsibility, of public service, so these sorts of changes have opened wide and deep debates, conflicts and internal tensions –and even industrial action–, as some deep-rooted rules are perceived to be at stake (Olmos, 1997).

***El País* and *El Mundo*.**

They are the first and second most widely read Spanish print newspapers. The first one is the most influential and the best-selling print paper, which decided in 2002 to charge for its online edition, until then also leading in this area. This decision allowed its rival's digital version to become the main online news provider in Spain and in the Spanish speaking world. When in 2006 *El País*, self-excluded from the market, rectified its decision and came back to the open Internet, *El Mundo* was well ahead of them, having adapted its online edition to a wider readership, being less or non-ideological, having developed a series of contents that helped to reinforce its position⁸⁹. From these facts, this fierce rivalry, and its evolution, more controversial due to the deep Spanish financial crisis in 2010, many lessons can be extracted. They are still both struggling for

⁸⁸ At least some print media in regions fulfill a social role, aligning themselves with well-known movements, as Machin found in the Valencia region. (2002 p. 141-157)

⁸⁹ Gumersindo Lafuente, deputy editor of *El País*, former editor of *elmundo.es*, to the author, in an interview on February, the 7th, 2011.

readers, for new ways to attract them, to catch their attention and increase their reader's loyalty. In 2011, their aud readers were audited by different organizations. The online edition of *El Mundo* reached 26,8 million users in January 2011 (OJD, 2012) while other rankings show them both reaching similar amounts of readers.⁹⁰

Some additional matters related with the field work and its presentation will now be outlined.

First, I will present my analysis in the next chapters following Mitchelstein & Boczkowski's order (2009). These scholars studied many academic investigations about online journalism and found that most researchers were stuck to a pattern of analyses that follows the journalistic process, something that seems logic from an epistemological point of view. I will therefore structure my research (subheading each part) under this taxonomy, hoping that will make it easy to compare how each newsroom approaches similar situations. In any case, this decision ought be seen in relation to my next choice.

Second, I have chosen to analyse the four media investigated by newsrooms rather than by processes. Both options have weak and strong points, but in order to make an analysis under Bourdieu's theories, one that focuses on how a specific *habitus* is shaped along the time, it seems more consistent to study newsrooms as units where the *habitus* of a particular group may develop than mixing different environments. Additionally, in order to understand the different stages of the process of adoption of the Net (and its associated behaviours and interpretations of them), it would seem more robust to make the analysis by newsrooms.

And finally, I have decided to introduce a light modification to the way traditionally these academic studies are presented, by doing first a narration of what I recorded, followed then by an analysis where I employ the interpreting tools described in this chapter. This is only a stylistic resource addressed to facilitate the reading, and enriching the presentation, making a clearer distinction between what comes from my notes and what is the interpretation under the theoretical framework already discussed.

⁹⁰ Data published at *El País*, from Nielsen, says that by January 2011, they both have about 5.4 million unique users, employing different criteria for this concept. (*El País*, 2011)

6. CONCLUSION

This research, then, is part of a long history of ethnographical studies about journalism. The selected methodology adapts perfectly to what I am looking to analyse: how journalists, as a social group with a strong identity shaped along decades, in Spain, a particular place, adapt their behaviour and the self-perception of their social role to what the new online journalism environment implies.

I have analysed four news media, representative of four typical and traditional Spanish news outlets and have taken a micro approach to their daily practices, seen the real environment and the real problems journalists are confronted with, about 14 years after their first contact with the new technology. My analysis departs from their real experiences, their efforts to survive in a very unstable market, and studies how those old journalistic ideologies adapt to this medium.

As a summary, this research on the one hand is looking to determine whether or not Spanish journalism is approaching the online challenge in the same way that was already described in other latitudes, or how different they are from this international pattern. And, on the other hand, I have chosen the wider theoretical framework of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of practice, to make a robust sociological interpretation of this process, in order to find out general trends, social behaviours and cultural processes.

Chapter IV

Diario de Mallorca

Online, fast, but the day after

“This is how it has always been, before and after the Net. We take the decisions on our own. I do not consult the Net to see whether or not a story is important. We do not care about what is being said online about a particular issue. We want to be the reference. We believe in our own resources”.

Antonio Ruiz⁹¹.

⁹¹ Personal interview with author. January, 29th, 2010.

1. THE CONTEXT OF ONLINE NEWS PRODUCTION

The Balearic Islands are a Spanish region in the Mediterranean Sea, about half an hour's flight distance both from Valencia and Barcelona. It is formed of four islands: Majorca, by far the biggest and most populated (676.000), Menorca and Ibiza (71 and 88.000, respectively) and Formentera (5.500) (IBESTQT, 2010, p. 34). The islands have a common language, a version of Catalan that differs slightly from that which is spoken in Catalonia (Melià, 2002).

In 2010 there were seven daily newspapers, dozens of radio and television stations and many online media in addition to the national media⁹². Five of those newspapers are published in Majorca: three in Spanish, one in Catalan and one in English. Today, as has been the case for the last 10 years, *Diario de Mallorca* is the second best-selling newspaper on the island (OJD, 2011).

These are the Balearic newspapers as the audit bureau OJD records them (2011):

Newspaper	Language	Circulation
<i>Ultima Hora</i>	Spanish	34418
<i>Diario de Mallorca</i>	Spanish	21167 ⁹³
<i>El Mundo</i>	Spanish	18646
<i>Balears</i>	Catalan	n.a.
<i>Majorca Daily Bulletin</i>	English	3311
<i>Menorca</i>	Spanish	5649
<i>Diario de Ibiza</i>	Spanish	6524

Online, these are the statistics of audited media (OJD, 2011):

- *Diariodemallorca.com* has 436,908 unique users in March 2010.
- *Ibdigital.com* 9,787 users, in March 2010.

Mallorcadiario.com (an online only medium); *elmundo-eldia.com*, *ultimahora.es*, *Mallorcadigital.com* and *dbalears.cat* are other online media but have not been audited⁹⁴.

Locally, *Diario de Mallorca* is a very influential print newspaper (Diario de Mallorca, 2003, p. 5), whose readership is mostly middle and upper middle class. Its ideology falls

⁹² As in January, 2011.

⁹³ Audited from July 2009 to Juny 2010. Circulation declined in 2011.

⁹⁴ Journalists at *Diario de Mallorca*, although lacking data, believe from their experience that the first three online newspapers in this list have a significant share of readers, while the last two are less popular.

in the centre of the political spectrum, favouring the autonomic and decentralising process that has been unfolding in Spain since 1980 and backing most of the more progressive social trends (Diario de Mallorca, 2003) (Company, 1994a, p 231, 232)⁹⁵. Its owner, the Editorial Prensa Ibérica (Epi) group, gives a huge amount of autonomy to its newspapers, which have independent editorial lines⁹⁶. Nowadays, the paper usually consists of 64 pages from Monday to Friday and at least 80 pages on weekends.

Diario de Mallorca was born in 1953 when two local newspapers, *La Almudaina* and *Correo de Mallorca* merged (Serra & Company, 1994, p. 23). At the time, Spain was under the rule of a Fascist dictatorship, in which newspapers merely served as loudspeakers for the regime. For decades, *Diario de Mallorca* had a mediocre reception well behind that of *Baleares* (Serra & Company, 1994, p. 137), a Government owned medium. Until the 1970s, *Diario de Mallorca* accommodated the political discourses that the authorities expected from newspapers, reproducing word for word the types of messages that were being transmitted by the government (Serra & Company, 1994, pp. 24-25). The final years of the Francoist regime were different, however, with more people daring to defy it and profiting from a weakening of censorship. In this context, by taking some risks, *Diario de Mallorca* gave voice to the democratic opposition, publishing content that challenged the authorities (Diario de Mallorca, 2003, p. 64). As a

Who is who

Pedro Pablo Alonso. Editor-in-chief.
Joan Riera. Deputy editor.
Antonio Ruiz. Deputy editor.
Matías Vallés. Deputy editor
Pilar Garcés. Society and Culture. Editor.
José Martínez. Local. Editor.
Felipe Armendáriz. Reporter in charge of Judiciary.
Xavier Peris. Reporter in charge of Crime.
Miguel Manso. Reporter in charge of markets and economy.

result, circulation soared, showing that people were hungry for democratic ideas⁹⁷. In 1977, when the dictator died, beginning a much anticipated transition to democracy under the rule of King Juan Carlos, *Diario de Mallorca* arose as a very influential newspaper in the Balearic Islands (Company, 1994b, p. 214 to 218).

In 1992, its owners, a wealthy local family, sold it to Prensa Ibérica, a national newspapers chain.

The technological side of *Diario de Mallorca* has changed often in the last few years, in order to cope with innovation. Today, its technology, based on web-applications and

⁹⁵ *Diario de Mallorca* is usually in favour of civil and political rights, adhering to a progressive agenda (Company, 1994a).

⁹⁶ Personal interview with the editor, Pedro Pablo Alonso. January the 28th, 2010.

⁹⁷ From 1972 to 1974 the number of copies sold rocketed from 12,878 to 16,495. (Company, 1994b)

centred in connectivity, is similar to that of the most advanced newspapers (*Diario de Mallorca*, 2003).

Diario de Mallorca began its online edition in 1996 with a very basic product and the same brand. At the very beginning, it offered only general information about the publisher, phone numbers and a survey about preferred stories, but from 1999 to 2008, *Diario de Mallorca* made the full print edition, as it is found on newsstands, available online. From 2008 onwards, a greatly reduced team of journalists was hired to add updated news-wires and link them to stories on the print edition. They continue to work separately from the main newsroom, a fact that generates not so veiled critical comments.⁹⁸

According to the editor-in-chief, Pedro Pablo Alonso, *Diario de Mallorca*, has yet to finalise their business model, as is the case with most newspapers in Spain. He says: “Information is very expensive to produce and we give it for free”, hinting that he is not in favour of continuing in this vein, which nevertheless is his company's policy at present.⁹⁹ Vallés, deputy editor, is clearer: “We journalists have been wrong many times in the past, but nothing is as important as the mistakes of media companies. They have decided to give news online for free. Even public health services are not entirely free nowadays. But media companies have chosen something that no one can understand”.¹⁰⁰ Today both editions still share the bulk of content with the print paper, where most of the costs and revenues are.¹⁰¹ Over 60 journalists work for the print paper at the main newsroom in Palma de Mallorca, and a small number of about five are solely dedicated to the online edition, working on a separate floor to the print journalists. Alonso says that it is the aim of the online edition to acquire a majority share of readers amongst Mallorca’s newspaper readership, after which the group's managers will make a decision.

Local competitors' policies were well behind those of *Diario de Mallorca*. By the beginning of 2010, the main print rival, *Última Hora*, still failed to offer the entire print edition online, or all updated news-wires. This situation has changed since then, but only in an attempt to match the levels of content available from *Diario de Mallorca*

⁹⁸ Comment by the deputy editor, Joan Riera, to the author in a personal interview on February, 5th, 2010. I had a previous interview with Riera on January, 29th, 2010.

⁹⁹ Personal interview with author on January, 28th, 2010.

¹⁰⁰ Personal interview with author on January, 29th, 2010.

¹⁰¹ January, 2010.

(Ultima Hora, 2011, n.p.). *El Mundo* subsumes its local information in a much more effective national website (see Chapter VII). The local online-only media have almost no reporters and merely reproduce news-wires.¹⁰²

The population of Majorca has doubled since 1980 (IBESTQT, 2010, pp. 34-35), while *Diario de Mallorca's* circulation is roughly the same (OJD, 2009), reaching a diminishing audience as a result.¹⁰³ Nowadays, they have a very significant presence online, but they still do not know how to make money from it. ■

I found that the print newsroom at *Diario de Mallorca* disagrees with its separation from the online team and would clearly prefer the online journalists to be part of the main newsroom (Juan Riera's statement). On the other hand, they are very much against offering for free what is on sale at newsstands (Alonso's on giving the online edition for free). They do not conceal their differences with the company's managers on how they value information as they offer for free journalistic work (Vallés' opinions on how wrong managers are). These comments blame managers for their difficulties and at the same time provide journalists with an explanation for their decline: they seem to think that their stories are appreciated by the audience, but that readers prefer to get them free online. So, the solution seems to be charging for news online and the most problems will be solved.

Analysing journalists with Bourdieu's theoretical tools, they are a field sharing a vision of their function. Managers, despite being part of the same company, are part of another field, the economic one. Journalists do not criticise openly their own company, but leave at the managers' door the questions about their situation, the lack of a robust strategy to deal with the new technology. They believe they are creating a valuable product (the task they are responsible for) that should be sold (the managers' task). "Even public health services are not entirely free nowadays" Vallés told me. They believe that they make their best but are being restricted by bad management, something beyond their reach. It is someone else's fault.

Despite this, seemingly using managers as a scapegoat, journalists have not articulated an alternative solution and have not voiced their concerns. They continue to focus on the print medium, ignoring even the most basic facts about the online edition (no one I met except the editor-in-chief knew figures about their online reach) and behaving as if their

¹⁰² Information checked by the author at www.ultimahora.es, and from a personal interview with Angel Neila, the manager of www.mallorcadiario.es, a regional online-only news medium on November 15th, 2010.

¹⁰³ The Majorcan print press on the whole has been losing presence for the last 15 years because it had not grow despite the increase in population.

print newspapers were still their principal output. In spite of their online presence, they do not identify with it and behave as if it was not part of their brand or their company. It is unusual not to shout about the extent of their online edition, especially when you are the market leader.

In a nutshell, *Diario de Mallorca's* journalists stick to a narrative where there is only a print paper, where they work. The online version is there, they know it, but it remains a matter for managers to deal with. They leave aside this disturbing issue by reminding me that they are just journalists and matters about the distribution of their work are not theirs (because, at this stage, the Internet is just about spreading their work and nothing else). It is not very different from what An Nguyen describes as common journalistic policies before 2005, when journalists were “more interested in how the Internet could destroy their business than how to become innovative leaders” (2008, p. 98). ■

2. THE JOURNALISTIC PROCESS.

i. INFORMATION GATHERING

It is 10.45 in the morning.¹⁰⁴ Joan Riera, 53 years old, one of the two deputy editors of *Diario de Mallorca*, arrives by taxi to the newsroom located in a modern building designed specifically for the newspaper in the outskirts of Palma. Riera is the fourth journalist that arrives today to the newsroom where they produce the print newspaper. The online team works elsewhere, with no direct contact with the rest. He says good morning, switches on the lights, hangs up his overcoat and sits down to read the newspapers that someone has left on his desk: all the press on sale in Majorca today, February the 11th. Riera well knows what he will find in the paper because he was coordinating its content until late the previous evening. In spite of this he still wants to check any unexpected modifications, but today no changes were made. Then comes the critical moment: the other newspapers' stories. Do they have more interesting and important content? Every morning he has to do this task, at least to amend today yesterdays' failures. “It is a worrying moment because journalists, above all, do not like being informed by another media”, explains Riera.¹⁰⁵ They always want to be first in publishing stories and scoops are vital for them.¹⁰⁶ To find them in another newspaper is

¹⁰⁴ February, 11th, 2010.

¹⁰⁵ Notes, comments and statements taken by author during the participant observation session.

¹⁰⁶ As Bourdieu wrote, scoops are vital to show journalist's capital to other colleagues in the same field, not so much to readers (Bourdieu, 2005, pp. 39-40).

very hurtful, not merely because of the impact on sales or public prestige.

At about 11, José Martínez, the editor of the local news section, arrives. “It is our main section because we can offer something really different mainly in this area, in local news, in what happens here, in Majorca, nearby”, explains Riera, describing the area Martínez is in charge of. Martínez, without batting an eyelid, checks the main competitor's headlines, then sits and glances at a paper with today's agenda. A few minutes later, Xavier Peris, the reporter in charge of accidents and crime, asks Riera to do the first change to yesterday's plan: “I will need the photographer for much longer than expected. The body of the victim has not yet been found and it will take some time. Police are near Campos looking for the body”.¹⁰⁷ Riera assents. He already knows that yesterday a man from Ecuador and four other people were taken into custody by the Police in connection with the murder of a woman from Bolivia, who was reported missing three months ago. In fact, the story is on today's newspaper front page, but it is not the main headline as in their competitor's case. He tells me “it is a woman that was reported missing few months ago. Her employer denounced to the Police that she had left her job at a restaurant without notice. Police, unusually, did not inform the press about the case. Yesterday, when the arrests were made public, we had to search the Net for pictures of her. And we found one on a website addressed to immigrants, *Baleares sin fronteras*¹⁰⁸, where someone had published her picture in an appeal for information concerning her whereabouts”. “This section,” explains Riera, “is not the most favourable for use via the Internet. The Police are the main source of news and they prefer direct contact. But, as with this murder, we use the Net to get additional data.” In fact, during the daily browse of the Net, one reporter found that somebody from Inca, Majorca, had been arrested in Asunción, Paraguay, under the charge of smuggling drugs. “We found the information in a local paper there. We then phoned the Police and they agreed to email us some pictures of the confiscated drugs and the person involved.” Riera smiles, unsure about the Paraguayan Police's respect for the right to privacy of a suspect in custody.

Every day, journalists have to fill the average 64 pages of *Diario de Mallorca*. “We used to arrive at the newsroom and find blank pages to fill. Nowadays, due to the Internet, we

¹⁰⁷ A small village, 15 kilometres to the east of Palma.

¹⁰⁸ This is the news mentioned: http://baleares-sinfronteras.com/noticia.php?Codnot=3375&Cod_categoria=3&Plant=mallorca [accessed on March, 27th, 2010], where a picture of the woman was published.

have all the necessary content to fill our pages over and over. With the Net, our job is to select, to choose, to discard from that amount of information that someone has served us, which is often ready for publication. Is this content relevant enough for our readers?" wonders Matías Vallés¹⁰⁹, a well-known columnist in *Diario de Mallorca*, who has worked there since 1985. He is describing a new journalistic function, associated with the Net: that of the curator, a professional in charge of selecting what is important and reliable and discarding what is not (Hermida, 2011, pp. 665-666). He does not reject this function, but still remarks that original reporting is more valuable.

Do journalists at *Diario de Mallorca* look at the Net for events that could become news? I ask a deputy editor, Antonio Ruiz. "Yes, of course. We look for every type of stories or clues that could lead us to them", replies Ruiz, who is in charge of supervising the national and international, sports, culture and society sections. "However, we do not usually find interesting content, interested rather". Ruiz is already receiving information from the sports section about plans for tomorrow's paper: they are expecting to offer wide coverage on what the international media are saying about Rafael Nadal, the Majorcan tennis player that had to give up the Melbourne tournament due to a serious knee injury. "You see, with the Internet we can check very easily what the international press says about Nadal and give our readers an idea about the importance of his injury". Miguel Manso was hired by *Diario de Mallorca* from another newspaper, where he had been in charge of the online edition. For him the Net is incredibly useful when you need to detect events that could eventually become stories. "It is a huge database. We can access official information, research, opinions and also can check other newspapers. [...] We usually browse the Net looking for information by clicking the word 'Majorca'. A few weeks ago, I found many links to a case of food poisoning that took place in a hotel in Majorca".¹¹⁰

Miguel Manso also found the beginnings of what promised to become an interesting story online: a German retired couple, who own a luxurious house near a beach on the eastern Majorcan coast, have organised a raffle in which their house is the prize. Officials at the Tax Office confirm that Peter Boddenberg has met all of the legal requirements. Manso has arranged a meeting with the couple at their house. Riera expects this information to be interesting and, above all, he wants to be the first one to

¹⁰⁹ Interview with author, on January, 29th, 2010.

¹¹⁰ Interview with author, held on February, 16th, 2010.

publish the story. “It was a success,” Manso told me, days later. “Many people commented on the story online and it showed that we can raise subjects that are popular. It was very rewarding.”¹¹¹

Every morning Antonio Ruiz checks the Net looking for emails or stories that could be suitable for the newspaper. “We need a lot of time to check the email,” says Ruiz. “At least half of them are useless. But we always have to check them. Quite often, readers send us photographs or stories that we did not know about.” Recently, a member of the public sent an email to *Diario de Mallorca* saying that an old and listed water mill in a private plot had been illegally knocked down. “We sent a reporter to the plot and actually found no mill. Had it been there before? We needed to prove the past situation. We found it on Google Street View. Google had taken pictures everywhere in Palma and we found the mill there. The Net is a huge source of information and as a result we could offer readers a picture before and after the demolition”.

Looking for stories, searching high and low for stories is an essential part of the role of a journalist. So, with the Net being the contemporary arena in which people can make public their ideas, journalists should now have access to a wider range of events. “Sometimes you can find something of slight interest in blogs, but never important content.” Miguel Manso has no doubts. Riera says that “if something is important in a blog, it is a mistake” on the part of the author. Antonio Ruiz also thinks that apart from “professional journalistic sources, there are very few stories on the Net that could be valuable. Blogs are not journalism. They are non-reliable sources. Even journalism on the Net is less reliable than printed. On paper, journalists care much more because this content is durable, can be stored and checked later. Online, even journalistic pages change every minute and sometimes what was considered important a few minutes ago vanishes later in the day. The Internet is too ephemeral”. Ruiz says that the Net contains plenty of “urban legends, what in fact are lies that run freely. We even published in the newspaper a feature about these legends”. As an example “weeks ago, we were told by members of the public that emails were running on the Net and on blogs that alerted people not to touch missing mobile phones that could be linked to terrorist bombs. It turned out to be untrue. But, you see: these lies run free on the Net but would never pass on in a journalistic website or medium” remarks Ruiz who stresses that checking these

¹¹¹ This is the story. <http://www.diariodemallorca.es/mallorca/2010/01/28/rifan-chale-garantia/540846.html> [accessed May, 17th, 2010]

stories and discarding them is expensive and vital to preserving the credibility of the newspaper.

Pilar Garcés is the Culture editor. She arrives at mid-morning, goes to her desk at the far end of the newsroom, where, on the other side of the motorway, the bay of Palma catches the eye. With this view in front of her, she begins reading newspapers. Garcés checks her email as her first duty. She opens emails addressed to the Culture and Society sections and her personal email. She will see only part of all emails that have been received. The IT department has previously deleted nine out of every ten emails that have arrived in the newspaper's inbox. "Despite these filters, I still receive a lot of rubbish. Look, once I have automatically deleted all spam and suspicious content, I have to delete an additional 555 emails that I have received since Monday. Today is Thursday.¹¹² I usually delete 1.200 emails per week, and I have to have a look through them because they could all be important." She therefore has to open and read every email. "I waste a lot of time every day. It is the 'noise' that we used to study at university" (in reference to Shannon and Weaver, 1949). "Worst of all: after deleting these emails, I have to attend to no less than ten daily telephone calls from people asking if we have received their emails which, of course, I have already deleted".

The content that arrives from the Net can be very persuasive indeed. "Look here" says Joan Riera, while opening an email that has just been received from Repsol, the biggest Spanish oil company. "They are addressing me by my first name, as if we were old friends. The email is signed by 'Repsol-Press Service'. Of course, I am not friends with someone with such an odd name." It is a well-designed email, sent on time, when journalists are making decisions for tomorrow's paper, addressing them in very friendly terms, being very charming, and disguising their interests in a very sophisticated way. Despite this, "the Net, as a tool to confirm news, to identify people or at least to get more information about them, to find information about companies, the land registry, markets or articles from other media, is incredible. It is a change that people like me could have not imagined in the Eighties or Nineties", adds Riera. "It is a valuable, huge, and easy-to-access database".

"It is flooding. Hundreds, thousands of emails. Sometimes we even miss some of the very important ones." Pedro Pablo Alonso, *Diario de Mallorca's* editor-in-chief,

¹¹² Interview and participant observation with author, on February, the 11th, 2010.

explains that this is worrying. “Last week we had information about a magistrate calling a politician to Court, but we heard from other media that she had decided not to show up. We had no information about her refusal, so we had to phone her and an assistant told us that they had sent an email announcing her decision not to go to Court. We found the email later. We now have more information than ever, but, as is characteristic of the Net, it is too much information, an amount that is very difficult to manage. I think that this is a summary of what Internet is: too much information. We need someone with credibility to assess what exactly is available online and to inform us about it.”

“There are public relations (PR) agencies that do their job in an almost perfect way” explains Pilar Garcés. “They take care not to bother you but, at the same time, they alert you. For instance, on Monday I got an email announcing that next weekend a Carnival party will take place at a specific location in Majorca. The first one had minimal information and was easy to read. Two days later, they send a very informative piece announcing what will happen, very detailed and sometimes with pictures. The day the event takes place, minutes after it has finished, they send me a press release. My first thought is not to use this information as it must be biased. However, at weekends we do not have enough reporters and we need to publish local stories in our section, so, it is very tempting and quite often we use them”.

Garcés finds an email: a research piece about the sexual behaviour of Majorcans. “In fact, it is a national study with data from all over Spain, but this source has taken the trouble to present the results in local terms. For our benefit, the email stresses local data, always relating it to the national one, but focusing on that which is specific to us”. It is a reliable source, the *Círculo de Estudios de la Concepción* [Conception Study Circle], “so I propose to publish this story”. She tells Antonio Ruiz to use this study and make some interviews in Majorca to give the local side of the story. Ruiz likes the idea and gets the approval at the content meeting. A reporter is then asked to interview a number of people in order to flesh the statistical information out. Both stories are going to share space. They therefore take the framework for this story from the Net and the local view from their own team.

Joan Riera explains that nowadays “it is not enough to reproduce a study as it comes. We need to give a different view and this is what we have done. Every other newsroom will be receiving the same information. Even online you will see the same information.”

The next day, this story is not given huge space on the front page, but Garcés is quite satisfied with the result inside the paper.

For roughly two hours, editors speak to reporters, look at wires, newspapers or the Net in order to decide which events to cover in tomorrow's paper, and following this, they have their first meeting. During this meeting, everyone explains what they propose to cover, the interviews they are planning, the events that are taking place, and so on. There are about ten editors and they are an experienced team. Usually they each give opinions about the content of the entire newspaper in addition to the stories they are in charge of. "Their plans are presented at the first meeting. The editors are in a critical situation: they are under pressure from reporters to get space for their stories, they are considering their sources and are also seeking to appease their senior editors who wish to shape the paper in a way that is attractive for readers. It is a balance that we have to keep between sources, events, and the stories we want to tell our readers," explains Joan Riera who, as every other editor, has been a reporter for many years, has his own sources and understands very well how reporters feel and how the role of the editor is perceived.

During the last months of 2009 and the first weeks of 2010, the Police arrested many local politicians on the suspicion of corruption. Riera explains that "we are usually told by the Police themselves that we should be ready because the next day they will do an important raid. We have to be silent but ready. When the operation begins, we can see what is going on but we get no details. We do not see the big picture. So we have to link what we see and figure out what is happening. We then need the Net to see who owns a particular company or who has been working with whom in the past. For instance, last time, while our team was outside an office where the Police were seizing material, we, here, found out who was behind the non-government organisation (NGO) involved in the investigation. Years ago we only had our imagination and the phone list."

Most journalists in *Diario de Mallorca* have more faith in print newspapers than in the Net. Vallés explains that "I like to simmer in the *New York Times*, *Le Monde*, *La Repubblica*. There I feel sure about what I am reading. But when I see the Net I am not able to say what is true, half true or a plain lie".

Miguel Manso nuances this opinion: "you can trust the Net as much as you can trust people in society. The Internet is another source and, as in real society, you must be very

careful about what you believe or not. There are as many lies on the Net as in real life. The Internet is like walking into a city. When you find a newspaper site online, you can give it the same credibility that you would give to a print newspaper bought at a news stand; when you see an online shop offering discounts, you can trust it as much as a real shop offering a discount and when you find someone offering cheap money on the web, is the same as if you find an unknown guy round the corner offering you cheap money. Would you trust him? Same online.” Curiously enough, Manso, the reporter who confronts the Net with the most open attitude is the youngest in the newsroom, and the newcomer. ■

All journalists I met at *Diario de Mallorca* began working before the Net was born and in most cases their careers were fully shaped without it. Their *habitus*, their understanding of how to be a journalist was framed without the Net. Only Miguel Manso, who is under 35, has spent most of his professional life with access to computers and the Net. Interestingly, he is the only one who has a slightly different attitude towards it, who does not see within it the ills of the wider world.

Most journalists at *Diario de Mallorca* work mainly as they always have: personal interviews, physical evidence, phone calls, direct contact. Neither *blackberries* nor *smartphones* are to be seen. They have built their agendas with direct contact and they still value this kind of interaction. The outcome of their work is still mainly distributed as it used to be, by vans, every morning, following which it is made available online. The only difference is their access to the Net, used mainly as a database. Nowadays much more data is available. Just that. Nothing else. For most of them, nothing else has changed. And so they claim.

This amount of data often creates a flood, which they fear can result in misinformation. They are overwhelmed not only by the number of messages that exceeds their ability to read them, but also by the vast number of topics and sources. They are concerned that this could potentially alienate them from real people in real environments, real places. Vallés, alarmed, tells me that “today one can write an article about, for instance, what the newly pedestrian street Blanquerna looks like¹¹³, and how people perceive it, without physically visiting the place. It is very odd indeed”. He does not seem to value online content as another sort of reality, and certainly does not see it as being as valuable as print newspapers.

These situations have already been described by scholars: journalism has a branch

¹¹³ A new pedestrian street in Palma, just opened to the general public.

related to production of original reporting (what Vallés and his colleagues seem to see as their unique function) or to curating, selecting, valuing a giving a hierarchy to what someone else has produced. Online, curating means processing contents that ordinary citizens have published online (Hermida, 2011, pp. 665-666). Many other authors have described the introduction of the Net as a transition from what Vallés considers “the real” journalism, original reporting, to managing what is available online, a “flood” of information, that arrives from different sources.

The traceability of statements is still a key factor for journalists. They question the veiled interests behind the Net. Despite this, in a clear conflict with their feelings but sometimes unsure about what sources to use, they accept PR material which is potentially biased in favour of the sender, due to the lack of resources (see the aforementioned Pilar Garcés in relation to the story about sexual practices or the Carnival).

Journalists consider the Net to be ephemeral. They think that online journalism is inferior because is easier to change (it is not fixed on paper, explains Antonio Ruiz). The fact that online content can be easily changed, erasing all traces of publication, reinforces uncertainty. By contrast, according to Manso, you can trust online content as much as you can trust the printed word: sometimes you are misled, sometimes you are not.

All journalists at *Diario de Mallorca* are used to the print logic: hierarchical structures, primacy of content over contact, a direct control of relationships. Vallés even fears alienating readers if they stop doing their traditional investigations. They are overwhelmed by a new model which is faster, shallower and ephemeral. They debate whether to reject what is coming from the Net or to adapt the Internet's features to their traditional rules. It is a cultural clash: “blogs are not journalism”, says Ruiz; “it is flooding”, says the editor-in-chief; “I [...] receive a lot of rubbish”, says Garcés; Vallés, for his part declares that he likes “simmering” in traditional media.

Fourteen years after the arrival of the Net, they seem to be in the first stages of formulating an approach to this new media logic by trying to adopt only what fits with their traditional values: a better dissemination of content and a greater access to some sources. Despite this, they still approach web-based sources from the point of view of their traditional practices and values. In due course I will narrate my visit to other newsrooms in more advanced stages of evolution towards this new medium and its values.

One must be aware about different levels of homogeneity in journalistic opinions: at this newsroom, I detected that all my interviewees share the same vision about these changes to their profession. It is obvious that *Diario de Mallorca*, a very traditional newspaper, has a journalistic team who defend quite traditional approaches (perhaps outdated) to

the Net, who are not used to a new language that has new characteristics not to be judged according to past values. It is particularly interesting to note how their opinions are similar, which shows that they share the same values and operate as a 'field' which protects and reinforces them. ■

ii. NEWS PRODUCTION AND AGGREGATION

The second half of the day at *Diario de Mallorca's* newsroom is very long, beginning at roughly 4pm and ending at midnight, when the newspaper goes to print. At 2pm, editors leave for lunch, after their first daily meeting, having made decisions about which stories to run, what resources to allocate and how much space to designate to each, which pictures and graphics to display and the types of comment, opinion and analysis to offer. Most, but not all, of the decisions are taken at this first meeting: at any moment, editors may change their strategy given that a lack of action could jeopardise the coverage of events unfolding.

The main goal of this meeting is to find out and share what they are planning to cover, in order to coordinate with the rest of the paper, Joan Riera explains. No journalist from the online edition ever joins them. It is not their business: they are two separate media. "At the meeting we develop a plan for the next day's newspaper", says Riera, who complains that they always begin late, and in fact, today they do. Some proposed stories are approved, others are assessed as requiring wider coverage, more resources are allocated; and sometimes senior editors consider content to be undeserving of the coverage that was initially planned or even that it should be totally discarded. To what extent does the Internet influence these decisions? "Not at all". Riera and Ruiz rule out any influence. "News could have arrived to the newsroom through the Internet or not, but the Net has no influence over our decisions."

Most of the reporters come to the newsroom between 4 and 5pm. They have received orders and instructions the day before, or possibly that morning as they will have rang up to inform the editor about the information they gathered from contact with sources.¹¹⁴ "Then we check what is valuable and what is not. Some planned stories shrink or are diluted and others swell, demanding more space. We had an initial plan that must be updated. Some reporters got what we expected and others did not. In some cases there is

¹¹⁴ No newspaper in Majorca was using Internet mobile communications. Reporters and editors kept in touch simply by mobile telephone calls.

substance, in others there is not.” In arriving, every reporter has a talk with his editor to check facts, spaces and pictures. “This is how it has always been, before and after the Net”, says Ruiz. “We make the decisions on our own. I do not consult the Net to see whether or not a story is important. We do not care about what is being said online about a particular issue. We want to be the reference. We believe in our own resources”.

About 5pm, the newsroom is hectic. Some reporters are contacting sources to check details; some are looking for past news on their intranet, some are talking to other reporters that have been in touch with a specific source and have direct references. The design team is rushing to adapt page models to evolving demands: “better a very short article here”; “please, the picture should be bigger” or “I do not have enough data to write that much text”.

Felipe Armendáriz is known in Majorca as the journalist with the longest history of Courts coverage. “I spend the morning at Courts. I have to be there because I need to see what is going on. Sometimes you see a policeman that should not be there so you wonder why he, who is in charge of certain sort of investigations, has come to Court. By finding out, you obtain some information that leads you to another place where, perhaps, you receive an impression of events. I need to see judges, officials, barristers and work out what is worrying them. You never know how, when or who will give you a clue about an issue, but when something important is about to happen, you feel it in the air. Everybody is nervous. When I eventually find something interesting I have to arrange, at that very moment, how to get, later in the day, the official documents and rush to the newsroom. It all happens off the Net.”¹¹⁵

Balearic politics have been under the pressure of magistrates and the Police for more than two years, when an investigating on corruption cases in different political parties began. There are more than ten different investigations going on and more than one hundred politicians are being frequently questioned by the Police. At least three politicians are in prison already.¹¹⁶ Armendariz's work and his sources are, for this reason, more valuable than ever. “All these developments are strictly off the Net. On the Net you will not find anything interesting. When you do find it, which is rare, you cannot publish it because you need the official sources, reliable ones. I can use only what is strictly official or I risk libel”.

¹¹⁵ Personal interview with author, on February 17th, 2010.

¹¹⁶ As in June, 2010.

Nevertheless, Armendáriz says that “the Net is very useful. Once I have my subject, I need the email. I need the official decision, petition or action which I only can get through an email. Years ago it was very difficult to write these stories because people were not used to having to make copies for the press as they are not paid to release information. They just helped us if they thought they had to, but not anymore. Nowadays I can get an email which is quite simple for magistrates, barristers and lawyers. It is highly rewarding because I can employ the precise words used in the case, which means that the information not only is better, but also that I may reproduce the exact terms of judicial actions.” Lawyers and even magistrates send their emails in the afternoon with the raw material for Armendáriz. “It is the only thing I care about. I do not look on the Net while writing. Why would I?”

Manso, on the other hand, recognises that Internet is very useful for checking details. In just a second “I can see if this or that detail is right, how some words are spelt”. Manso also admits that “sometimes it would be much better not to have the Internet because you can waste a lot of time trying to be perfect, checking every detail”. Matías Vallés is more critical: he wonders “when can I stop looking for another useless detail online? You could be always looking deeper and deeper. It is an endless circle. And in the end you forget that journalism is not a matter of details.”

Editors like Pilar Garcés or Antonio Ruiz admit that they keep updated online. Every moment during the day, but mainly from noon onwards, the Net offers fresh news. “When I see a story that I had dismissed or assessed as insignificant on an important website it is very distressing. I used to feel that I was wrong” says Garcés. “Then, fearing the critiques from other people, I used to rush to include this story in my pages. I had considered it unimportant but when you see it on a prestigious news site you think that maybe you were wrong, there must be something important that hasn’t yet been revealed or properly assessed. Nevertheless, the next day the print editions of these papers often do not publish the story that made me crazy. I had changed my own paper and as a result I am the only medium offering this information that in the end they did not value as I had predicted. Nowadays I have learned to rely in my own criteria. Now I am used to these websites that overvalue the latest news and that are changing content every moment. It is their choice but not ours. The print edition has other rules and we should not mind about the extent to which content is being published and changed

online. Today, looking on the Net, I would dare to predict tomorrow's print edition of many papers and I would not be mistaken. In the beginning it used to be very distressing though.”

Alonso also chairs the second editors' meeting, between 7 and 9pm, by which time the newspaper is almost done. “At this stage we make decisions about all content. We decide the pictures, stories and features that will be on the front page; what is important, what is unique to us and what has the power to move our readers”. The meeting begins with the list of stories that had been discussed at midday. Usually the editor-in-chief checks articles page by page. Throughout the day, editors inform the team about changes, but even carefully maintaining this flux of information, the senior staff need to see all changes together in order to visualise what tomorrow's paper will look like. Sometimes, a new evaluation of stories arises from this meeting. Someone may realise that what is going to be published on a certain page is more significant than they had expected or been told, or, on the contrary, that there were huge expectations for a particular piece of news that, once seen, they would rather relegate to a secondary page. Less often, a source is called into question as unreliable. Here, seniority is important. During the meeting it is knowledge and experience that are at stake. Everybody has to be open and explain their points of view, but in the end, Pedro Pablo Alonso is the one who decides.

It is 7.30pm. Joan Riera has just finished the second meeting, in which they have decided what will be on tomorrow's front page. “We are giving more importance to our own stories”.¹¹⁷ They know that stories that have been arriving from news agencies and issues on the public agenda will be covered in other media. “When information that is already known requires front page coverage because it is very important, we try to offer an interpretive headline stressing causes or consequences and how events will affect people rather than just repeating what they probably already know”. Tomorrow's biggest headline will be a widely known story presented from a local point of view: “we are informing people about the Government's decision to delay the retiring age by two years from 65 to 67, but we add something else even at the headline level. We say that half a million people will be affected by this measure just in the Balearics and feature interviews with many people in Majorca explaining how they feel about it. We have

¹¹⁷ Interview with author, on January 29th, 2010.

reactions from many local sources. We apply a local cover to national stories that are already widely known. It is what differentiates us.”

Riera reckons that changes in journalistic behaviours will be difficult to implement: “we are used to certain practices relating to ordinary and repetitive news. It is hard to change newsroom habits but we are doing our best to focus on other factors. We are aware that we need to be different, to stress what it is about the nature of our newspaper that gives us an advantage, because we know that print papers are read much more than news from an online site. We no longer run features that readers will not read” stresses Riera, “we want to create a newspaper that is worth reading. We are afraid that in the future less people will buy newspapers, but we hope that they will continue to come to us looking for deeper content, not just light or breaking-news. We need to give analysis, framework, details. We have to write well and we need people with valuable comments.” Riera, Ruiz and Alonso agree that Internet-only media are not yet of value. “News is very expensive and we know that the newsrooms of online media outlets are very small. Most of the time they just reproduce news-wires. Giving our own news and a deeper treatment of stories gives us advantage”. At this point, Riera agrees with Miguel Manso: “Information that comes from PR organisations or from press officers or information that is biased towards the source has less a chance of getting a space in our paper. I would say something even more radical: journalists that bring us routine information, merely repeating what sources say, or journalists who are loudspeakers for other people, will have a smaller chance of being with us.”

“In the past we used to write our stories, check the details and say goodbye. Today, we are writing news and checking our screens at the same time to see what news agencies are saying about the same event we are writing about. Sometimes this information is displayed on your own news site, so we have to offer different content, we are obliged not to say the same thing, not to repeat what is already known”, says Miguel Manso. “It is very demanding”.

Joan Riera, deputy editor, understands that a reporter, when repeating the same point of view as another newspaper, takes fewer risks. “It is definitely important to know how other media have interpreted the story. It is natural not to take risks and say the same as others do. We all want to be on the same boat as everybody else because this means we have a better way of defending ourselves. Nevertheless, very often on the Net it seems

that information is live for only a few hours or even minutes, after which it disappears for ever. It is therefore risky not to look at other media, but it is even more dangerous not to have your own criteria and follow what you see on the Net at a specific moment.”



Journalists at *Diario de Mallorca* are confronted with a radical change: a new medium is emerging while they are still producing a traditional newspaper. This new medium demanding an adapted *habitus* that is not yet shaped. Even worse, it is still based on the print logic. In the previous stage, while collecting stories, journalists used the Net without altering their more deeply-rooted practices. However, at this stage, when it comes to evaluating, writing, selecting and carrying out the gatekeeping function, this clash of cultures is evident. Journalists often write stories that have already been published online, telling readers what could have been found out the day before. It seems, and it might well be absurd to look for the original dimension to something that has already been made public: It could be nothing but utter nonsense.

Pilar Garcés, who checks her screen to assess the topicality of a story, reckons that “the print edition has other rules”, implying that the online edition also has its own rules, ones they are not acquainted with. Garcés is attached to rules of print journalism because she thinks that she is writing for a print paper. In fact, that is what she is mainly doing. However, she accepts that she has learnt the way online media stress last minute news and overvalue things that are much less valuable, from their perspective. They are living a process where, on the one hand they are still used to producing journalism in a print mode, and on the other, are confronted with new rules, associated with the new technology: doing online journalism with the rules of print journalism, with its *habitus*. As has been described previously, Garcés reckons that she is learning how to read what is online on other sites, how to relate to the Net.

Despite Garcés' hints at these different reasonings, Antonio Ruiz, when asked about their criteria for newsworthiness, says that, “this is how it has always been, before and after the Net”. He has always worked with a model, in which every piece fits well, and he sticks to it, as his colleagues do. They reinforce their idea that they are still in control of what is happening, that they are still shaping the public agenda, still the primary reference. All my interviewees have worked as gatekeepers of stories for most of their lives, as those who were in control, and they still collectively see their role as having a future.

Do they have any influences from the Net? “Not at all”, says Ruiz. Nevertheless, observing their work, they are influenced by the Net to the extent that they are looking

for a new profile. They try to redefine their social role as being more accurate and in-depth, offering more background and being more original than what is freely available online, which is ephemeral and fast, offering only superficial stories. It is here that Manso and Riera believe they may have forgotten even their own rules: they became used to reproducing what certain sources wanted them to print and now believe it is time to be different, to go the extra mile. They seem to be looking for a platform that offers more original and in-depth, and therefore more valuable information, rather than the faster, shallower and biased information that is commonly found online. They realise that a better newspaper could make itself valuable in the face of faster online competitors. They seem to be forming a new identity which, in an unconscious way, is being built on the move.

However, when assessing their actual content compared to other media (see Appendix 1), the efforts of *Diario de Mallorca* are not enough. It sometimes offers new, exclusive stories of a higher standard than other news media, but it also frequently covers stories that have already been reported online, to which readers and reporters have had access for hours. Their goals clash with routines and practices that are not easy to overcome. In the same way that journalists at *Taloussanommat* (Thurman and Myllylahti, 2008) were not doing what they claimed to be necessary to create a successful online newspaper, at *Diario de Mallorca*, they still find it difficult to overcome their own past, the habits that have formed as the result of many years sharing a set of ‘dispositions’ that worked effectively.

Nowhere in the newsroom was a sense of urgency to be perceived; they are still not pressurised enough to change their routine, because they still lead the market and nothing hints at an immediate change to arrive in this situation. No other medium is threatening them: their closest competitors are performing as they are or even worse. So, they all face the same fate. I am told that: “everybody does the same” says Alonso. The war is not taking place inside the field but with newcomers that they treat as being outside of their area, who they do not even regard as competitors. What they offer is different from what is available on the Net. “Blogs are not journalism”, they claim, suggesting that readers will not find online stories worth reading. Somehow, they want to believe that their professional journalistic field will not compete with the blogosphere. They offer more quality, they are at a higher level.

I would like to call the attention to the way in which Garcés feared the critiques of her co-workers when discussing her doubts about her assessment of the news. What she was very much aware of was of being very different than her colleagues and been seen as out of place. Riera says that reporters prefer to follow the flock when choosing a point of view for their articles. They do not seem to be concerned by their readership as much as by

their colleagues, those members of the same field that give out or withhold cultural capital and recognition. These attitudes, shaped by the field, are those that still count for individual players as journalists. As a group, however, they still feel comfortable, convinced about their future and their role in it. ■

iii. DISTRIBUTION OF CONTENT

When, at mid-morning, journalists arrive at the newsroom, they do not comment on the day's paper; they seem to be concerned only by tomorrow's edition. Journalists always forget the stories from that day's print edition, while readers are only beginning to look at them. They are always one day ahead of readers or, more truthfully, they place readers one day behind events. So, while yesterday's stories are being distributed around Majorca with dozens of vans, journalists are concerned by a new newspaper not yet born. They believe that an important part of the events of the day, the public agenda and meetings have been shaped the previous day. They are aware that most social agents will react today to what, to them, is yesterday's news, just published that morning.

The print edition is internally considered to be the important one, the one that counts. Being involved in a profession that is prone to hype, it is an awkward fact that they focus on an old type of technology. "The newspaper is the main goal," Alonso explains. "We prioritise the paper and so does everybody else. When somebody on the team has a good piece of news, we keep it for the print edition. Today the paper is even more important. A few days ago, we published an article by Antonio Papell stating that print papers are still the ones that shape the public agenda. However, I accept that this is a time with many contradictory messages. There are more readers than ever. People are buying fewer print papers, but are not reading less. We have more than 400 thousand [monthly] users online." He then shows me a full page advertisement published in the print edition, stating that theirs is the first online newspaper in the Balearic Islands.¹¹⁸ What Alonso questions is their business model.

"Every journalist needs to know what is happening, how other media have covered the same or different events", Riera tells me, while returning some finished papers to one of the five heaps where, for a fortnight, they will be kept. This morning Riera discovered bad news: they made a good newspaper, but the main print competitor has announced

¹¹⁸ An advertisement addressed to newspaper's readers suggesting that they connect with the online site.

that a no-confidence vote has been arranged by opposition parties at Palma city council.¹¹⁹ Now, he has to begin an investigation in order to find out what has happened, why this story is not featured in his paper. First of all, he needs to find out whether or not it is true and secondly, why his reporters missed it. ■

Ultima Hora, *Diario de Mallorca*'s main competitor published a huge headline on its front page on February, the 12th, 2010: "A no-confidence vote was in the pipeline in Palma council". No clues about this scoop were published on the web the previous day. All members of the field, not only *Diario de Mallorca*, reserve their best content for the paper, where they believe the competition is fought. 14 years after the arrival of the Net, journalists are still firmly convinced that the print edition, distributed a day later, is still more important, is the one that still counts, where the best stories must be published. Being conscious about how important it is to be fast, getting the exclusive story the first, they do not lean towards the online medium but still to the print. As it always was.

Immediacy, although for other media might be the most important characteristic of online journalism, is fully ignored by *Diario de Mallorca* and its competitors.¹²⁰ In fact, articles written at midday, for instance, will have to wait until the following morning to be read. We have seen that the pattern of readership online has changed (Boczkowski, 2010, pp. 118-124) but journalists here are still doing things as they always have.

The old habits and outdated style of organisation, in addition to the inertia and lack of any real challenges to their position are behind this attitude. Bourdieu's *habitus* ("the product of history produces individual and collective practices and hence, history" (Bourdieu, 1977/1972, p. 82) and Schulz's "journalistic *habitus*" can be seen here: the newspaper's staff tend to stay as they always were, "they tend to largely reproduce the structure of the field" (Neveu, 2005, p. 6).

Obviously, *Diario de Mallorca*, as is the case with many other newspapers, have not yet reorganised their internal structure in order to apply and develop what the Net offers in terms of distribution of content in real time. This change would be risky, but is it more so than their present situation? Not being challenged by their traditional competitors, this medium is working almost as it did before the Net's arrival. Neither do they challenge their competitors. Although they are aware of the tough times ahead, they still try to reproduce their past. Here Bourdieu's words are clearer than ever: "it is yesterday's man who inevitably predominates in us [...] Yet, we do not sense this man of the past,

¹¹⁹ *Ultima Hora*, February 12th, 2010. Although the opposition parties had got to an agreement about the non-confidence vote, it was never formally produced, due to internal conflicts.

¹²⁰ As stated by journalists at *Diario de Mallorca*.

because he is inveterate in us, he makes up the unconscious part of ourselves” (Bourdieu, 1977/1972, p. 79). What can be expected of yesterday's journalism is more or less what we see at *Diario de Mallorca*. ■

3. PROFESSIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL MATTERS

“Sometimes you would be inclined to believe that on the Net you can say whatever you want without any consequences. I think that in future Justice should take action. We are confusing the right to say what we want with the right to libel. We have a right to express ourselves, but not to slander. And the frontier between these two actions is becoming blurred on the Net.” They might have used different words, but all of the journalists that I interviewed share Riera's concern.

Joan Riera began working as a journalist in the early Eighties as a reporter at a local radio station in Majorca. Riera, as most journalists at *Diario de Mallorca*, believes that it is still print newspapers that shape public opinion. “As was the case back in the Eighties, the medium that has the power to influence society is the print press. I am not saying that this will always be the case, but today you definitely need to be part of a newspaper to have an impact. It was the same years ago. I remember I got a very important story at my radio station, and, despite the fact that it was broadcasted many times, it had no impact. Then I told a journalist from a newspaper, who published the story citing my radio show as his source. Following this there was a tremor in the political establishment as they heard my story, which they reacted strongly to. Well, this continues to be the case today with the Net and print newspapers: stories still need to be featured in a newspaper to be important”. Alonso agrees: “without doubt, the print press is the reference. Newspapers do not offer their best information online. They just put online a small part of what they know. They are often subtle, in order to confuse their competitors. They reserve their best content, the stories that make the difference, for the print edition. They publish just what everybody already knows online, without any analysis or reactions, which are kept hidden for the print edition”. Alonso confirms Bourdieu's idea about the “game of mirrors” (1998/1996, pp. 21-27): what most media intend is to confuse competitors, regardless of their readers; what is paramount for them is what their colleagues in their field think or believe.

“It is quite obvious that, at least in Spain, most of the electronic media are making

efforts to get a space in traditional print media in order to become known. In some cases, significant journalists from the electronic world have been accepting posts at print media with smaller salaries". For Pedro Pablo Alonso, "we are still years away from print media losing their dominion of the public agenda." Perhaps this is the reason for their lack of concern about the Net and their own online medium.

Later I meet Matías Vallés at a corridor. Surprisingly, he is not in a hurry. It is noon, which journalists at a print newspaper would call "early morning", and he seems relaxed. He had not been previously informed about my work but once he has been he consents to having a talk. Without hesitation, he gives me his insight into these matters. "It has changed and it is changing. I have three dates to give as reference points for these changes: in the year 2000, I published "Mallorca, destino obligado" ("Majorca, mandatory destination") a book about celebrities that had taken holidays on the island. At the time, before Google existed, I found a lot of information on the Net, using the search engines available. Five years later, with two colleagues, I published another book about the flights that CIA's agents and planes have taken from different places in Europe to America, and probably to Cuba, with illegal detainees, often calling at Majorca. By this time, Google had arrived. In this case the conclusion was crystal clear: that there would be no book without Google. So it is simple, Google was the key. It was fantastic to look for a plane and to find it on the Net, with every detail, even pictures, some of them taken at our airport. With traditional methods we would definitely not have been able to find this information. In the second book, however, I realised that the Internet could be very risky: we said that these agents played golf while in Majorca and this was repeated a thousand, a million times, without anyone calling me or my colleagues to confirm it. No one in the world called us to check when, where, and how could we certify that these people had been playing golf. In spite of this lack of certainty, information ran across the Net faster than ever. What would have happened if we were wrong? Who would have said that this information was untrue?"

"Now – continues Vallés – I am thinking about publishing an article claiming that Google is definitely useless. In 2005 we used to find information from different reliable newspapers, but today, this has been replaced by a flood, a huge amount of information from unknown and unreliable, online sources. Whatever you look for, you find rubbish from sources that nobody can identify, and we do not know their motive for publishing

it. When the earthquake struck Haiti, the Spanish television used images taken from YouTube that were actually from Italy. When the street riots occurred after the last polls in Iran [2009], the BBC used images that were coming from the Net, taken using mobile phones. How can we be sure that these images are what they are supposed to be? Who has been there to testify that this footage is true and that it reflects what has been happening in Teheran?”

“What is worse is that we need to use this material. Like eating trash food when we need real food. We all eat it. We have to realise that we are on quicksand. But we need it. We cannot survive without it.” This information, from unknown authors, coming from who knows where, is distributed faster than ever, to every server in the world, where it will survive, despite the addition of new data.

Vallés states: “when we decide to write an article, overcoming our self-censorship, we are often advised by lawyers to check every detail, to measure every word very carefully. My articles, like everybody else's, are seen by many people before going to press. When we publish letters from readers, we ask them for their identity card, their address and sometimes we even phone them to check that the letters are theirs. However, once this carefully written content goes online, a person without name, address or any other identification can publish comments that may be pure libel, full of insults and every sort of lie. How can this be allowed to happen? How are these people permitted to say what they want, without being identified? I use my real name and my photo every day, and give my email at this paper and my information has to share space with this untrustworthy comment that no one knows the origin of.” He tells me some insults that he has received from people in this manner, some of them genuinely offensive.

“This is definitely journalism with a burka”¹²¹. This is why Vallés, when looking for stories says “Nowadays I tend to use sources that are traditional” In his opinion, these are not going to die out. “In the future the press will still exist, even the print press. Journalism was and is about selection and choosing content. Before it was a process of selecting from a limited amount of sources, today it is more like discarding things from an overwhelming amount of content.”

Is the Internet giving a voice to people that was previously absent from the public

¹²¹A full body cloak worn by some Muslim women.

sphere? “Francisco Umbral [a well-known Spanish writer who died in 2007] used to say that everybody potentially has a good novel in them, as long as they write it, which is often an insurmountable hurdle. But there is something that has changed. I still remember when we could reject publishing certain stories. We journalists could exclude them from the press and, as a result, kept hidden, out of the public domain. This is history; today we have to publish everything because otherwise not only will things arrive on the Net but they will be even more attractive to readers because they will be presented as the story that was censored by x. Because of this, the press is freer today. The Net has imposed freedom upon us; the press is more open because the Internet has condemned us to be freer against our will. It is true that today, as a result of this, there is no content that cannot be published one way or another. This is imposed freedom”.

Pedro Pablo Alonso also stresses the credibility problems of the Net: “in the beginning it caused a naïve fascination. Now, more people are beginning to be aware that the Net carries plenty of risks and dangers.” Alonso thinks that both journalism and people need time to adapt to the new technology. “The future is online, but the press is not going to die without a struggle. And, of course, we need – I would say more than ever – someone that we can trust, who can give us a new social role. I do not believe in citizen journalism. My mother always had an interest in health, but she would not say that she was a doctor, and she would not question her doctor about a drug or a treatment. In our case it is the same. But it will take time.” ■

The Internet brings up many professional dilemmas. One of such questions might have to do with the issue of libel, which is considered to be a crime in the real world but is practically always ignored in online media. How can readers compare the professional approach taken by journalists, their levels of responsibility (“it is my picture on the front of paper”, says Vallés) with the Net, on which everybody is hidden, and on which content is anonymous (“journalism with a burka”), or too superficial, too ephemeral to hold anyone accountable for it. Journalists at *Diario de Mallorca* are highly critical of web browsers because they do not distinguish between reliable sources and fake content created for dubious reasons, such as the promotion of hidden interests. Browsers do not choose between content that is reliable and content that comes from unknown sources, which creates a confusing picture. The staff at *Diario de Mallorca* claim that journalism as a source is reliable (although they believe that the information about the CIA's agents playing golf was not checked by journalists). Traditional journalists at *Diario de Mallorca*

are generally against the growth of an Internet culture which lacks a gatekeeper to control what is published.

All these particular characteristics associated with the Net are part of the new medium in the same way that the print, radio or televised journalism have their own specific features. What they are stressing is that they have a conception of their work, have learnt how to do journalism, and collectively are in a disposition to stick to their traditional practices, ignoring, minimising, rejecting or ridiculing what is new. *Diario de Mallorca* is not in a rush to change: its place is not at risk, the company is not going well, but managers do not control journalists, so journalists resist as much as they can.

The lack of a convergence with other media platforms in this newsroom, such as radio and television, is remarkable. The team is not opposed to multimedia, they simply do not engage with it. Neither managers nor journalists feel the need to prepare for its arrival and are comfortable with things the way they are. No-one in the newsroom seems to be aware of the growing popularity of multimedia platforms in news coverage and, as there are no other players employing it in the local news market, they have chosen to wait and see. Many people access platforms such as *YouTube*, where stories about daily life in Majorca emerge, as often as in any other place, but journalists dismiss them as non reliable medium, which lacks their commitment and quality.

Related to these journalistic criticisms to the Net is their vision about their own future social function: they could become the source of reliable information, advising which news sites and sources must be avoided (again acting as a sort of gatekeeper that, could now bridge the gap with the Net). This future, however, lies a very long way off. If at all.



4. THE AUDIENCE AND ITS INTERACTIONS

Felipe Armendáriz is in charge of Courts news, as described previously. He says that he does not check the Net for stories nor while he is writing. “Tomorrow, once I have published my story, I could have a look at comments online, most of which are preposterous, by the way. The Net begins when we publish our information, never before. When someone comments on these cases [for the prosecutions against prominent politicians], which nowadays happens quite often, I am not in a position to follow them because I do have the information that really is reliable. Sometimes, on the Net, in a thousand comments, you see one by someone that appears to know what he or she is talking about. But could I use it as a source? Who is this information coming from?

Who is this person? What I do, afterwards, is to look for clues I have seen online, but this rarely happens. Usually people's comments are untrustworthy from a legal point of view. I do not look at posts from readers. When I do, I do not see original ideas, merely insults and opinions which lack foundation and are biased towards an ideology" explains Felipe Armendáriz.

"What has changed quite considerably with the Internet is our knowledge about reader's preferences", says Pedro Pablo Alonso. "Now every detail is known. However, in the end, we do not learn much: we already expected people to read more sports than politics or more news about celebrities than about the economy. What is particular to Majorca is the fact that people have a huge interest in corruption, which tells us what we already knew, that people prefer sports, strange stories, crime and, since we also offer video content, watching unusual, surprising or shocking events." In spite of knowing what people prefer, Alonso is not eager to give them what they want; he adds that "we need to keep a strong link with what is important".

"Maybe some journalists claim that they do not check to see how much their material is valued or how readers are reacting. They are just misleading you: everyone looks at least once a day to see how people value their work and how many comments their stories are getting, whether or not they are being criticised, and what people value most in their reports". Miguel Manso accepts that this ranking has become something like a contest and that these interactions with their work influence journalists' behaviours and attitudes. "When a reader says that you are wrong because you have missed a detail, it is unbearable. When I wrote the feature about the raffle, it was a hit on the Net. It got a lot of readers online and also provoked many to comment, but I forgot to give the electronic address on which you could see the estate that was given away as the prize in the raffle. Almost everybody online complained about that," says Manso, dissatisfied with his failure.

Does print journalism ever find itself involved with citizens' journalism? "No." Joan Riera explains that "in very few circumstances is there ever anything that might be called citizens' journalism. In the end, it all converges with traditional journalism. At some point someone somewhere could have had access to an event that may have been newsworthy, but that would be difficult to achieve on a regular basis. To gain access to a flow of news or sources from outside the journalistic world is rather insurmountable. We

have already seen this with the alternative radios that emerged in Spain some years ago. In the beginning there were huge expectations for them but in the end they were not able to keep them going.” Riera regards traditional journalism as the only real significant force, as the front line of information.

“I have problems finding factual information on the Net that I do not encounter with traditional media. Politicians”, explains Riera, “have access to first hand news, but they would never write blogs about it. If they did write a blog, it would only be to express their opinions and make comments about how press do not treat them the way that they deserve. When you see an important piece of information on a politician’s blog it is an accident. Neither the economic nor the political world uses the Net to inform the public about what is really going on. When they have something really important to say, they plan a means of attracting media attention, or they phone you up.” ■

Most journalists at *Diario de Mallorca* completely dismiss readers’ online comments. Armendáriz even claims that readers can only begin once he finishes his work, so that it will not affect his and other journalist’s work. They believe that journalism is the main provider of real content on the Net, with everything else being second class because their origin may be unknown or biased, or merely useless information with no substance. They believe that most news agents, especially sources, still look for a traditional medium to source factual information from, to gain a sense of topicality. This resembles what Reich (2008) found in his investigations into citizen journalism. All journalists I interviewed at *Diario de Mallorca*, except for Manso, claim that they do not care about readers’ opinions and do not even expect them to make valuable comments. Interacting with readers, as a means through which to give them a voice, is not considered a viable option in *Diario de Mallorca*’s newsroom: it seems that they accept the fact that readers can now comment on their paper’s content as an obligatory phenomenon which has no benefits for journalism. (“It is not because you do DIY that you become a carpenter,” Alonso emphasises.) They all stick to the very traditional rule: “we talk, you listen; we write, you read”.

Unchallenged by other players, still being massively followed by politicians, still with a respectable print audience, with competitors doing more or less the same reading of this transition, journalists at *Diario de Mallorca* are almost at the departing point in the journey that Seth Lewis describes as the evolution from a traditional journalistic practice to a more participatory and open one (2012).

Whilst discussing citizen journalism and participation, Riera reminds me that years ago a

wave of amateur radios came to Spain, amongst much hype about its significance for the democratic access to media for a larger demographic and its ability to promote a sense of openness. Now it is history, and nothing changed. "It was very expensive and it demanded a system, a set of procedures". They are used to challenges such as these from emerging media, and, in the end, merely continue as a stable company, firm on their principles.

Of course, these journalists are aware of what is happening with their profession around the world. They know that their weight is diminishing, that their influence is decreasing, but they did not expect this to happen to them, in this island. It is someone else's problem. They prefer to be as they used to be, to look for what they always did, to behave as they did for years. And they seem to be postponing solving the conflicts for tomorrow, for a tomorrow that they would like never to arrive. This is the power of a closed, non-challenged and comfortable environment, or field, where the past tends to survive disguised as the future. ■

5. CONCLUSION

My study of *Diario de Mallorca* takes place 14 years after their first online edition was opened. I would say, however that what I witnessed today fell short of a proper online edition, resembling the print edition in almost every respect, happening to be available online the following day. 14 years after first launching the online edition, things have not changed much, though *Diario de Mallorca* are now fully aware of the Net, its advantages and challenges. However, they are not yet familiar with it: immediacy is a concept not yet fully understood; multimedia has not yet arrived here; interaction with online users is not a priority and, of course, hyperlinking is not on their agenda. Nowhere in *Diario de Mallorca*'s newsroom did I find the slightest criticism about their delay in adopting the new technology, or about their failure to understand its language and its features. Did journalists at *Diario de Mallorca* not see the changes that all types of media are experiencing around the world? Of course, they do. Why, then, do they not change their product or become more interactive with their audience? Why do they not properly employ multimedia features rather than continuing to merely publish the newspaper online the day after? They prepare a daily print newspaper, as they have done for decades, following their well-rooted principles for print media. When everything is ready, it is transferred onto the online platform. It appears that while rooting for stories to be published as they always have been, they employ the Net only with caution,

realising how unreliable it is. They, who are used to looking their sources in the eye and meeting them at their offices to be, where everything around them contributes valuable complementary information confirming identities and positions, now have to rely on a new medium, something defined by Vallés as “journalism with burka,” made from that which is the hidden and dark.

Journalism has worked in this way for a long time, they believe at *Diario de Mallorca*. They have immersed themselves in the same logic since they arrived at the newsroom many years ago, reaffirming their beliefs and practices in the newsroom and with their colleagues. This set of dispositions allows them to make sense of their world, resembling the group dynamic that Bourdieu describes as fields. They do analyse the Net, but from within the frame of their field, with their own values. They therefore broadly reject new approaches because those conflict with their understanding of journalism. They are used to struggling with competitors, other print media, under their own rules. Alonso is only reassuring himself when he says that: “everybody reserves their best stories for the print edition”, implying that everybody is proceeding likewise. My interviewees, by embodying the voice of journalism at a particular historical stage, represent a culture, a collective *habitus*. From within this structured system of thoughts, they do posit some deep questions that interrogate the features associated with the Net. Is, for instance, such a fast method of communication valuable? Can our society manage itself with so shallow a level of information? Are we going to accept information from unknown sources? What is important in a story, facts or form? Vallés gives us the answer at the same time as posing the question: “this is rubbish” he says “but we need it, we eat it, this is how we work now.” He believes that new technology is taking them into a novel environment with new rules and, despite the crude nature of Vallés’ opinions, they will have to engage with these new values.

Some provisional conclusions arise from the analysis of this particular newsroom:

- (a) Changes do not occur fast when your position is not under threat — and *Diario de Mallorca* is locally very influential, it still has a large audience, and, although diminishing, its business is still profitable; moreover, no online or print competitor challenges its position, although the mood is rather pessimistic about the future —;
- (b) Social groups who have a key social position, as is the case of journalists, tend to act in order to preserve their status and, in this line, they perceive the Net and its associated

values as a risk rather than as an advantage. Behind the long list of complaints about what the Net implies for their profession — most of them real obstacles, but less important when compared with the print difficulties — a cultural rejection of what is uncertain, new, revolutionary, might be disguised.

(c) these players mutually reinforce their attitudes addressed to maintain the *status quo* rather than fighting to get acquainted with the new medium;

(d) younger actors have relatively more open attitudes, but the group as a whole is powerful enough to dilute their influence.

Mine is a study carried out in 2010, but the picture would not differ much from what could have been seen in 1997, for instance: their values and practices remain mostly unchanged, and perhaps the biggest novelty would be their awareness for the Net. The only stage where they do employ the Net without second thoughts, seems to be in the collection of information, to access what they call a “huge data-base”, ignoring that this is what everybody else finds very seductive, too.

Chapter V

Efe

The revival of news-agencies

“Although we use some elements of the Internet, we need much more time to properly say that we have adopted the culture of the Net. [...] In some areas [...] we are basically doing what we have always done. To be really new, we should be using a specific type of language, shorter headlines, adding audio and video. We will need a generation to adopt the Net. But my generation is still the one that firmly occupies positions in the media, so it will take time”.

Juan Ramón Romero¹²².

¹²² Romero is *Efe*'s style editor. Personal interview with author held on January, the 31st, 2011.

1. THE CONTEXT OF ON-LINE NEWS PRODUCTION

Efe's main building is located in a central area of Madrid, a stone's throw away from the Castellana avenue. The main newsroom occupies the first of five floors where more than 400 journalists work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. What were originally white walls are now yellow as a crow's foot; what years ago was a state-of-the-art office is today an

Who is who

Javier Tovar. Editor-in-chief. Spanish News
Javier Lascurain. Deputy editor. Coordination.
Marta Cerame. Editor-in-chief. Television.
 Worldwide.
Luis Sanz. Deputy Editor.
Lourdes Alvarez. Deputy editor. Television.
 Worldwide.
Gregorio del Rosario. Editor. Television via
 Internet.
Arturo Linares. TV Producer in chief.
Raúl Casado. Editor. Society and Future.
Juan Ramón Romero. Style Editor.
Jesús García Becerril. Editor. Madrid
Amaya Quincoces. Reporter in charge of science
Carmen del Portillo. In charge of the
 coordination table.

age-worn space that is crying out for a revamp. In fact, I was told that architects are designing a new headquarters at Madrid's outskirts, but, meanwhile, this is a traditional building for a traditional team.¹²³

Although *Efe* is not considered a global news agency, as the British *Reuters*, the American *Associated Press* or the French *Agence France Press (AFP)* are, it is a major regional player, being the lead

operator of Spanish news with the most important network of branches and correspondents in Spain and America (Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen, 1996, pp. 15-19, 32) (Olmos, 1997, pp. 31, 723). There are about 1,000 people working for *Efe* in more than 100 countries, well behind the number employed by *Reuters* – 14,000. *Associated Press* and *AFP* have smaller teams, at 3,400 and 3,100 respectively in 1995, but both still dwarf *Efe*.¹²⁴ Nevertheless, *Efe* is an agency that is leading what could be considered a group of regional players, with Spain as its stronghold, where it has 20 local branches. *Efe* now has roughly 3,000 clients worldwide, most of them in Spain, South and Central America and the Spanish speaking areas of North America, including the United States (Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen, 1996, p. 29).¹²⁵

In 2010 *Efe*'s revenue was marginally more than 90 million euros, with a deficit of 2.3 million, for second year in a row, after a period of three profitable years. Its only shareholder is the Spanish State, through a public holding called Sociedad Española de

¹²³ *Efe* has been in this building since 1977.

¹²⁴ *Reuters* offers a range of services on financial markets and that differentiates from other news agencies.

¹²⁵ 900 Spanish customers, as stated by the President, Alex Grijelmo, at the Constitutional Commission, at the Spanish Congress (Spanish Congress, 2011)

Participaciones Industriales (SEPI), where most publicly owned companies, usually heavy industries, are grouped. The State does not demand profits from *Efe*, but expects a public service not only for Spain, but for the Spanish speaking world.¹²⁶ For many years, the State footed the bill for *Efe*'s losses, but since mid-Nineties, when the agency began to balance its accounts, it has not needed additional funds from the Government.¹²⁷ 70 per cent of its expenses are salaries. Its staff is relatively well paid, mobility is low, and their average age is rather high.¹²⁸ Although the company was obviously linked to the former Spanish dictatorship, since the arrival of the democracy, *Efe* has been a pluralist medium, giving voice to every political and social movement.¹²⁹ Working in many countries at the same time, doing its task under different regimes and ideologies, selling its services to customers from different backgrounds, its approach to news and journalism is very professional and founded on a commitment to public service. This idea is entrenched in the newsroom. Its members take part in different internal committees that control quality, plurality and impartiality. Journalists at *Efe* are the few individuals that have a voice in their board, although they are not involved in making final decision (Olmos, 1997); they are accustomed to a very influential position in the journalistic sector and somehow they are a step ahead of other journalists in Spain. Most of today's managers are about 50 years old, they have often worked in different countries and are used to different political, economic and social environments.¹³⁰

Javier Tovar, who is 50 years old, is in the final year of his mandate as National chief editor. He, a former political reporter, was appointed by the board of *Efe* and ratified overwhelmingly by members of the newsroom, who have the legal right to endorse or contest appointments. He, with a certain sense of failure, believes that "there were too many high expectations and the results probably do not match them". He is part of a team that came to change the way things were done, but it was a choppy journey. "We

¹²⁶ Information from *Efe*'s financial statements, as published yearly by SEPI (2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010), the public holding that is formally in control of the company.

¹²⁷ *Efe* is internally described as a non-ideological news provider (Efe, 2006), focused on informing, according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that in its article 19 says that "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers". It is usually understood that it is a tool to foment the flow of information in Spanish and, in this sense, keep a homogenous language, as stated by *Efe*'s former president, Alfonso Sánchez-Palomares (1995, pp. 14-20). In this sense, *Efe* has published a well-known Spanish dictionary, that tries to amalgamate the European and American forms (Efe, 2000).

¹²⁸ Source: Javier Tovar in a personal interview with the author, on January, the 31st, 2011.

¹²⁹ During the Spanish Dictatorship born from the Civil War in 1939, *Efe* was part of the Catholic and fascist propaganda apparatus (Olmos, 1997).

¹³⁰ Javier Tovar in a personal interview with the author, on January, the 31st, 2011.

had a judicial confrontation with the staff and unions that left many scars”.

Tovar talks with me in his small office that is always open.¹³¹ Through its huge glassed windows to the newsroom one can see perfectly blue *post-its* on many computer-screens calling to an industrial action that took place months ago, against job cuts in *Efe*. “At this moment crises in economic and journalistic models are occurring simultaneously. Our present losses are not linked to a change of model, which has been profitable for us, but to the downturn in most media companies. We have the highest number of clients ever, but they are asking for fewer services, in order to cut costs. They try to make savings in all their expenses”. Tovar remarks that *Efe* decided in the midst of this crisis not to lower prices. “It is easy to lower them, but later it is impossible to raise them back to their right level”. As a result, *Efe* is suffering in this situation. Tovar remarks that they are offering new services to cope with the situation: “we now sell alerts for mobile phones and are exploring, still experimentally, event-coverage for digital media, a sort of Twitter, in real time”. In fact, a few days ago they were offering live coverage of an important parliamentary session by the second. Of course, “we are not creating as much income as we are losing”. Elsewhere, I was told that the recent merger of *Telecinco* and *Cuatro*, two television stations in Spain, was a blow for their revenue: *Telecinco* had its own television news agency, called *Atlas*, and as a result *Cuatro* cancelled its previous contract with *Efe*.¹³²

The mood is very optimistic on the second floor of the building: there, Gregorio del Rosario¹³³, editor of TV news, has just pasted a report on a glass-window about profits: their television service has increased sales in 2010 by a 120 per cent. In just three years, when they began their service, the revenue went from a tiny 26,000 euros in 2007 to 842,000 in 2010. “The number of clients has enlarged spectacularly. In economic terms we are the future, despite the fact that the paper is the biggest source of income”, says Lourdes Alvarez, deputy editor of *EfeTV*, who complains that many people in *Efe* do not understand them. “We are just 60 people and we are adding another dimension to the company”.

In the Eighties and Nineties, *Efe* missed the opportunity to create a TV news agency in its area of influence. “We have a standard broadcast service just for Spain, but not for

¹³¹ Interview held on January, the 31st, 2011.

¹³² Marta Cerame, *EfeTV* manager, in a personal interview with author, on February, the 2nd, 2011.

¹³³ Personal interview with author, on February, the 2nd, 2011.

America”. Due to this lack of service, in 2007 they explored the option of offering television online.¹³⁴ “We now offer three levels of quality: the highest is only 2 per cent worse than the broadcast standard; below this is a service ideal for online media, and lastly a poorer service, ideal for mobile phones”, explains Arturo Linares, chief producer.¹³⁵

The key slogan at *EfeTV* is “multiplier effect”, in Gregorio del Rosario's words. “We receive a piece of news from whatever office and then we personalise it in European and American Spanish, in Catalan, in Portuguese (Brazil is an important market for us), in Arabic and in English. The narration is adapted for each country and audience, highlighting that which is important in the specific area.” In fact, opposite to Gregorio is Rodrigo, a Chilean journalist who I can hear recording his voice onto a video for South America and beside us, two young Brazilian journalists are rehearsing the same recording for Brazil.

“We are offering 40 stories a day, 70 per cent produced by our own teams. We began just offering soft news, but now we are also introducing hard news. The market is growing and we are in a good situation to profit from it” says Arturo Linares, chief producer who is concerned now with his communication with Bogotá, where a team is adapting contents for South America. Other people at Cairo translate into Arabic and in Barcelona to Catalan. “We offer a 24 hours service, but our offices in charge are rotating”, says Linares.

“I really fear the friendly fire”, says Marta Cerame, the chief editor of *EfeTV*. She is talking about other areas in *Efe*, where people do not share her optimism. “Our people around the world see how necessary a new attitude to changes is, but here at the headquarters, there are many colleagues that seem to believe that they are protected against these challenges, that they will always be as they are”. However Cerame is backed, as is Tovar, by the board of the company.

In the newsroom, the team are watching a short video just arrived from New York: it is Ricky Martin in a concert that took place the night before. Now they are preparing the voice-over for this piece. For the Spanish market, they will inform about a Martin's future visit to Barcelona; for South America, they are creating another specific version.

¹³⁴ *Reuters*, *APTN* and *CNN* offer a full satellite service to America, much better and expensive than the online product of *Efe* but, for this reason, they are not present on the Net.

¹³⁵ Personal interview with author, on February 2nd, 2011.

“I have just received another piece from Bangkok, about Thai wines, and we are now preparing the spoken text. It will be online in no more than two hours”, Gregorio del Rosario tells me. “We have different customers. Some of them are subscribers to particular services, so they receive our products directly; others take them from the Net, where they can be downloaded, after payment.” They are serving many niches: some online travel, arts, fashion or food sites are subscribed to some services, whilst other customers subscribe to the whole range of services.

EfeTV had had two recent hits at the time I visited them: one was the Chilean miners' case¹³⁶ that, for weeks was almost exclusively their story, because competitors arrived much later. “We had teams in Chile, so we could be at the scene very quickly.” The second story was about Evo Morales, the Bolivian President: a reporter from the Bolivian office in La Paz went with his camera to a friendly football match played by local politicians; almost towards the end of the game, Morales, angry for a referee's decision, attacked another player from a different political party without an apparent reason. “It was a huge hit. It was very profitable all over the world.” And in this case, they had to use their lawyers, after investing a lot of time detecting web sites that had unlawfully taken footage.¹³⁷ “So, we had to call and threaten them with legal action unless they paid the fee. It shows that you always have to be alert about how things work in this business”, explains Lourdes Alvarez, deputy editor. ■

A rare case in the Spanish communication world, *Efe* is a company managed by journalists chosen by the board and ratified by the newsroom. Despite that, as soon as this managing team made their first decisions, three years ago, the relationship between bosses and the newsroom deteriorated, becoming even nasty, to the point of calling for an industrial action and taking their social disputes to the Justice.¹³⁸ The result was “many scars” in the trust among them, in Tovar's words. Managers believed that the company had to adapt its working practices to the Net and its demands, in order to reduce and eventually end losses, while the newsroom did not agree. It is strange that managers and the newsroom team are now battling one another, when the former comes from the latter: all managers at *Efe* were part of the newsroom, where they did not defend their present

¹³⁶ At the end of 2010, an accident in Copiapó, North of Chile, trapped 33 Chilean miners in a deep coal mine. Days later it was found that they were alive. Media attention massively focused on the successful rescue operation which took months and came to a happy end.

¹³⁷ This is the *Efe*'s news about Morales: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5II1hfbbBaE&feature=related>

¹³⁸ Some leaflets and posts online made by trade unions against managers were quite critical of them.

position. This is a highly remarkable situation: those who were part of the journalistic field, occupying high positions, now on managerial posts are seen as aliens (or worse, as betrayers), as people with other interests. On both sides of the boundary between these two fields – the financial and the journalistic – there are expected behaviours that actors accept regardless of their previous background. This is an appalling situation because on the one hand the change of mind was almost immediate and, on the other, the newsroom stood firmly by their former commitments. It all relates with the Bourdieu's theory: actors must deal with the sort of capital that their field requires, despite their history. Moreover, it is actually crystal clear that the managerial field is more powerful than the journalistic one, hence the tendency of those who have scaled up in the social ladder (as Javier Tovar and other managers coming from the newsroom), to ignore their previous lower role: they need to be seen as fit for these new jobs, where the capital and *habitus* at stake is different.

For the management, *Efe* has benefited from the online world: first and most importantly, it has more customers than ever, reaching further than ever. The Internet has also brought other new business opportunities: an automatic service of *texts* for mobile phones to twitter-like special events-coverage. Although the income for these services is small, it has inspired managers to look for additional business opportunities in non-traditional sources. The TV section is the area that is profiting most from the Net. It takes more and more revenues from a business that offers rewards for being innovative: they are selling an online television service worldwide, produced mostly by themselves, adapted to the Net, personalising it for specific customers, with the goal of adding value to each piece. This shows that, when fully adopting new techniques, results can be positive. They explain that in order to have success on the Net, a new, less rigid approach is needed. This is an achievable goal at *EfeTV* because it has no traditional working patterns or entrenched routines to hold it back. It is therefore remarkable that this internal change is, to say the least, only reluctantly accepted by most other members of staff. It takes us to the journalistic field: those on the margins tend to take more risks, while those in central positions struggle for their past glory.

It is apparently shocking that the TV service team feel isolated and under pressure by its own colleagues from other areas. Cerase's comment about her "fear [of] friendly fire" points to these two extreme different attitudes: on the one hand her team, fully open to adopt the new technology and, on the other, the rest of the newsroom, whose members would prefer to stay where they are. The smaller group (60 people, on the second floor) is pitted against the larger group (a 400 strong team in the main newsroom on the first floor), their two approaches completely divergent. Clearly there is a cultural clash occurring, in which one team (the only one expanding within the company) has accepted

a new way of doing things and become more flexible and less constrained, to be rewarded with new markets and a better internal position. The other group defend their central place, reluctant to changes. The root of the social conflict at *Efe* comes from a clashing of values: whether or not to use television cameras and become more flexible by changing traditional practices: a conflict between structures and construction, between history, *habitus* and that which is new and unknown. ■

2. THE JOURNALISTIC PROCESS.

i. INFORMATION GATHERING

Raúl Casado, the editor of *Society and Future*, politely repeats that he does not find any special interest in a congress about first aid.¹³⁹ “Really, I do not see how to publish this story”. He is on the phone, talking with the public relations people that, for the last week, had been sending him a high volume of emails about this event. Eventually he finishes the call by saying “ok, I will do what I can”, which could be interpreted as “I will not cover it.” Exhausted, he then says to me: “it is another person in public relations that must have promised that he could get his story about congress published. Every day we spend a lot of time doing this”. He takes a seat and, when reopening his email account half an hour later, finds 60 new messages. “I have to check every one” he tells me. In fact, one of them was a message informing him of a correction to the TV schedule of a station. Every day *Efe* delivers TV schedules to each newspaper in Spain. “And we must be sure about the correction of schedules.”

Amaya Quincoces is the reporter in charge of Science. She sits on the other side of the row of desks at which Casado, her editor, is working. She has spent a long time with me and has not been checking her email account, which she now discovers has 200 new messages.¹⁴⁰ “Of course, I just open those whose subject is clearly important to me”. For her, the Net is a resource which grants a great deal more access to the world, but one which also “reduces personal contact with sources.” She joined *Efe* 17 years ago. “I remember when the Net first appeared: most of my colleagues complained, they rejected it, but nowadays we cannot imagine ourselves working without it. Life is much easier; we have access to a greater amount of sources and I can send questionnaires by email in

¹³⁹ The name of the section was chosen as a declaration of intentions, looking towards what is new, innovative.

¹⁴⁰ Personal interview and participant observation on January, 31st, 2011.

a second. On the other hand, we have less personal contact with sources. I would not recognise the faces of some of my sources, and this is new. No doubt we have more quantity, but less quality.”

Opposite Amaya and beside Raúl, Teresa, the specialist in health news, is writing a story about the impact of the new Spanish anti-tobacco regulations. She has been in contact with all of *Efe*'s regional offices and is already finishing her piece. She has not made use of the Net, except for her email account, but is now searching for the location of a village called Pinoso, in which a bar was heavily fined. She checks it on Google (Pinoso is in Alicante, South-eastern Spain) and now she knows that her facts are correct.

Juan Ramón Romero sits nearby, in the fact and style checking section. Their task is verifying everything before publication. They all are senior journalists and are seated near to the main editor. Being more experienced than most other members of staff, they have a greater authority. Romero has held senior posts around the world, but especially remembers the United States, where he spent many years.¹⁴¹ He also was the office manager-in-chief for the Basque Country, an important post within *Efe*'s organisation due to the significant news stories it regularly produces.¹⁴² The Net is Romero's primary research tool. “We are sort of *googlexperts*, a skill that allows us to discern in a very subtle way what is behind a story. It is like a third sense. I know who I can trust or not just by using Google. It is a very tricky job but after a few years of using it I am accomplished at it. For instance, once I found the Spanish word 'cironio' which I had my doubts about how to spell. I asked the author and she told me that she had found it many times on the Net, even in *Efe*'s news, as had I. However I went further and spent a few hours working on it, and found that the word originally came from *Efe*, from us. We had initially misspelled the word 'cironio' and then other users repeated us. Eventually we took the mistaken spelling as if it was correct.¹⁴³ You see? It is a vicious and very fast circle. It is amazing how quickly this mistake spread around the Net and how, in the end, it seemed to be a correct word.” As a fact checker, Romero claims that “the Internet is simply amazing”. Romero compares his work using the Net with a carpenter's job, whose tools hang on the wall to be employed when needed.¹⁴⁴ “In the same way, we have a number of favourite sites that we use when the case requires. We know the

¹⁴¹ Romero really enjoys telling me how different and exciting it was working in that country.

¹⁴² The political unrest and ETA in this region of Northern Spain is very demanding.

¹⁴³ 'Cironio' also spelt 'zirconio' is Spanish for a chemical element called 'zirconium' in English.

¹⁴⁴ Personal interview with author on January, 31st, 2011.

capabilities of our online tools. After so long time using them, we can guess the results of our work and we are usually right. It takes time, but in this sense, the change has been amazing.”

Jesús García Becerril and his team of ten journalists share an area opposite Casado's section. They are in charge of information about the city of Madrid.¹⁴⁵ Today, it is a quiet day. They have just received by email the official figure of jobless people in Madrid for January, and now, minutes later, trade unions have sent, also by email, their predictable reactions. Every month they receive the same emails, the same press releases and, “unfortunately, the same figures”, or so Jesús believes, whose job it is to turn the press release into a short, well written story. Ten minutes later, the story is available from every online media outlet, each with a slightly different headline. “You see,” says Jesús, showing me *El Mundo's* local digital edition on his screen, “they were waiting for our story to be published.” Jesús did not even talk with the trade unions during this process; it is a routine, mechanical practice.

Javier Tovar is clear about the ways in which the Net can be used: “there are reliable and unreliable sites. I have to stress this to students doing internships. The web page of a retired judge is very different to that of an official institution, as is the personal blog of a socialist party member to his organisation's webpage.” Not long ago *Efe* was forced to sack a young member of staff who incorrectly used sources which he had also failed to check; now people are more aware than ever about where they look for information. Tovar adds that few months ago, *Efe* had been seriously affected by the credibility problem associated with the Net: “months ago, while there was social unrest and reported riots, no journalist was accepted into the former Spanish colony of Sahara, under Moroccan control since 1974. So we had to rely on non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the field. We tested their reliability and eventually we accepted some of the pictures they sent us, but one of them was a fake. We suspect that a secret organisation was interested in passing this picture and accusing us of a lack of rigour. The fact was that we were wrong and we had to apologise. It was very damaging to us.” Tovar continues telling me about the time a bomb exploded at the Navarra's University. “Our journalists found witnesses that were recounting their experiences on the Net. One of them was even saying that someone had died. Of course, it was valuable information

¹⁴⁵ Participant observation during the morning of February, the 1st, 2011.

because we got some hints about how significant the bomb was, but we had to find these witnesses and check their identities, confirm details and only when we were absolute sure about the reliability of this information, did we publish it”.

Exclusive news is paramount to journalists. Javier Lascurain remembers that traditionally, before the Net, a scoop could last for a day or more.¹⁴⁶ “I used to look for judiciary news on Fridays at midday. If I got a story, I would be the reference for that until Monday morning, because no other journalist could contact my source during the weekend and, should the issue be considered relevant, they had to cite me as their source. This is not the case anymore. We know about scoops seconds after being published, when we still are able to adjust our work accordingly. On the other hand, our own scoops are also discovered in seconds.”

Luis Sanz is a deputy editor for Spanish news. “Look here”. We are in the room where every morning, just minutes past seven, editors meet to plan the day, to allocate resources and confirm their agenda, which will be published and sent to customers in order to plan their work. On the table some papers have been left, which were used in this morning's meeting. “Look”, repeats Luis showing me the print agenda for today. “We have more than five events that have been designed by politician's press officers to influence the agenda. And I find that today is a quite calm day. See: the Foreign Affairs minister will be on *Antena 3*; the Interior minister will be on the Ana Rosa's show;¹⁴⁷ the socialist parliamentary spokesman will be on *Punto radio*. What are they going to say? No one cares. And we, as a public news agency that have to cover every event, have to cover what they say, which is nonsense. These events have been artificially produced to influence news on the Net, whose life will be just a few hours, but they show where the agenda will lean during the day.” The combination of speed, and the fact that everybody knows instantly what other media are offering, generates a situation which, for Luis Sanz, is potentially risky. “We used to experience these phenomena just in August, what we called 'serpientes de verano'.”¹⁴⁸ In the summer it happens because there is no news so journalists tend to repeat what their colleagues are saying. Nowadays, however, it

¹⁴⁶ Lascurain explains to me that journalists dislike citing a competitor as their source of information, but when something very important or unavoidable becomes known and a reporter has no other source, the options are to ignore the story or cite a rival, a very humiliating experience.

¹⁴⁷ A daily television magazine.

¹⁴⁸ It is a process that begins with rather minor news that, as a result of an excess of coverage, becomes important and then, again gets more coverage, spiralling into a big and baseless media story. It could be related to what in the United Kingdom is often called “the silly season”.

happens on a daily basis. All media rush to cover the same news, to focus on the same angles, looking for something that simply does not exist or is irrelevant. Media cover news of this sort because all other media are doing the same and either no one wants to be different, or they cannot afford to be different. We are publishing no-news as real news.” Sanz feels the need to remark that “I am not against the Net. I think that it is a positive innovation, but we should analyse what we are doing with it. For instance, during the day, news agencies, both traditional and digital, should be able to see where it is sensible to focus its attention. Then we would not all flock to the same news and reduce diversity. Most of us feel, though, that we cannot keep back. It is an large-scale phenomenon that is creating a huge amount of superfluous coverage.”¹⁴⁹

Quincoces confirms, from her own experience, that media tend nowadays to homogenise content. “In print media, they try to adapt what we have said, but online, they just reproduce our work. Look here.” She shows me two pieces, one her original and the other a reproduction from a print paper. Amaya has entitled her story “Humans share 97 per cent of their genomes with orangutans” but the newspaper's headline says “Just 3 per cent of our genomes differ from orangutans”. Quincoces detects something more important here: “We are now living in a more global world, in which contents are the same wherever you look. It happens with information just as it does with fashion; there are many brands, but they all sell the same products. In science media the same thing: when they talk about genomes, every media outlet dedicates its space to genomes; when it is cancer, everybody cares about cancer. Aids was once one of these subjects that has now faded. Stories relating to Africa are not welcomed these days; instead, anything you care to mention about homosexuality will get a space. We tend to offer the same contents all over the world. For news, boundaries are really blurring. We inform people about more or less the same issues in Europe as in the States”.

“Of course, online we tend to offer the same content. For me it is very clear” says Lascurain,¹⁵⁰ who is in charge of the coordination table and is therefore in direct contact with topical issues on a daily basis. “We have to wait until the next day to find another approach on print media. There, one may find a different focus, but online during the day it is all the same.”

“We have a reporter at the Police station now who is getting us more details about an

¹⁴⁹ Personal interview with author, on February, the 1st, 2011.

¹⁵⁰ Personal interview with author, on February, the 1st, 2011.

anti-drugs operation that took place few hours ago”, says García Becerril, who has just been in on the telephone with the journalist. “*Efe* delivered the first information at 8.29 this morning. There were 28 arrests. More information was sent 29 minutes later; enough to be published on a digital medium. We are now waiting to see if we can get any more details or pictures.” Journalistic work in Madrid's section is as it always has been, with one reporter at the Police station, another following the city's mayor and a third trailing a Basque conservative politician.

Ana, a reporter involved in judicial news, gives García Becerril an urgent press release, which says that the judge who is trying the case of a driver who was arrested for drink-driving, who yesterday hit an old man with his van, killing his granddaughter, has granted him bail. The incident occurred in Alcobendas, north of Madrid. García Becerril writes a brief story, dated in Alcobendas for the Madrid service (a well known village) and in Madrid for the National service. At 12.54 it is written, with no media reproductions until 14.09. Most digital services are still running the previous story with the headline “Dad, you have hit a girl”, relating the facts that the van's driver was taking his son to the same school as the girl who was killed.

Raúl is checking Teresa's story about the tobacco laws. Her headline read, “Regional governments have imposed no fines in application of the new tobacco law,” but Raúl offers her another option: “Many inspections, no sanctions,” which she accepts. It will be published shortly, but before it is, a newspaper calls to ask when they are planning to send the tobacco story. “At 14.00” says Casado, who adds that “it will be 600 words long”. Casado tells me that “nowadays I am able to put a number of long stories in important newspapers. It is a matter of finding interesting issues. Last week we wrote a story about mortgages in Spain which, at 1.200 words, was very long, but it worked well. Again this weekend we featured another long piece about Germany's offer to accept qualified jobless immigrants from Spain.”

Information gathering at the second floor, where the TV service is based, is quite different. “We do not have the same resources available as the main newsroom downstairs. Hence, we pushed to create a coordination area so that we would receive information at the same moment as the press room. Now we have solved many problems. A member of our team has a station on the first floor, so that he can be informed in real time of what is happening. As a result, we know how things are

evolving, who is going to cover specific events, where things are happening and so forth”, says Alvarez. She realises that technology is on their side. “We began using our brand and our network effectively. Our brand gives us credibility and our network coverage. We are all over the world. And we leave the rest to the technology. We, television, still work separately from the photo department, but this will only be the case for so long because soon photo and video cameras will be the same thing. Technology will push us to merge. In certain areas we are still different, but in others we should already be working together. Cultural problems, however, are much harder to negotiate than technical ones.”

The coordination table is on the first floor and it consists of a representative of each main area: photography, national and international news and TV.¹⁵¹ Sports and Culture however, are being integrated, although still in an experimental way. The table is the place that is used “to coordinate our coverage of important events and inform our newsrooms. We want to make important information available in all formats”, explains Carmen del Portillo, the journalist in charge.¹⁵² They are now watching Angela Merkel, the German Chancellor, and José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, the Spanish Prime Minister, on an internal TV circuit, giving a press conference in Madrid. At the same time, they are following a team rushing through Malaga's mountains, where a murder has taken place. They are looking for images, witnesses and testimonies to broadcast in the next delivery via satellite to Spain, and online to America. ■

At *Efe*, journalists are concerned about many new phenomena emerging from the Net. However, they seem to be some way ahead of *Diario de Mallorca*. For instance, at *Efe*, journalists seem to have mostly solved the credibility problem related with the Net: they have developed additional checks to confirm what is true and what is not; they regard information that is published on the Net as pointers to investigate, but everything must be checked. Despite these precautions, the Net is a tricky tool to use, as they have seen in the Moroccan conflict, which serves as a reminder of how important those checks are. Nevertheless, their criteria seem to work well and they do not discuss this matter as much as they do in *Diario de Mallorca*. Once accepted these new rules, they are facing and dealing with new situations.

Romero tells me something interesting: he has become accustomed to the new Google

¹⁵¹ In *Efe*, the sections television and photo, due to their history, work separately, as stated by Alvarez.

¹⁵² Participant observation on February, the 3th, 2011.

logic, to the point that he would dare to guess the outcome of his work online. He believes that use of the Internet may become as common as other methods of communication, meaning that more value will be placed upon it. This will take time, but a certain familiarity with the Internet is becoming more common.

At *Efe* they are entangled with a new phenomena associated with the new technology that in *Diario de Mallorca* was neither seen nor foreseen: the immediacy of the Internet creates an unfolding of dynamics previously unknown. Being a domain to which information comes at a rapid pace, online media tend to magnify the most insignificant stories simply because they are current. As a result, they tend to produce a “serpiente de verano” something like the “silly season” in England: a situation in which minor events receive extensive and undeserved coverage. In this situation, one medium, concerned with current trends, follows others in covering an event; they themselves are then followed by other media, also anxious not to be left behind. Delivering rapid coverage therefore translates into constantly magnifying meaningless events in situations such as these, which is why public relations generate artificial agendas to constantly provoke artificial stories that fly around because they are there, not because they are important. It is a phenomenon that adds to what Boczkowski already described about the effects of immediacy on online journalism (2009, 2010) but, in this case, going still a step further: it is not only that journalists imitate colleagues, but sources adapt to this new situation, learn how to play the game, and produce an artificial agenda to influence what is on the public sphere. And, again, the spiral continues with journalists rushing to follow the flock, covering minor stories that are presented as if they were relevant.

Quincoces hints at another worrying trend: homogenisation on a global scale, a tendency to reduce diversity, to apply foreign values to local situations and to reduce the voices available in the public sphere. In science, Quincoces’ specific field, trends are global and the issues that large media corporations care about are instantly replicated all around the world. As Paterson (2006) has demonstrated, the Internet tends to produce an homogenisation of contents in news media around the world.

Traditionally journalists valued scoops as their paramount achievement. It was a reliable and standardised way of creating cultural capital in the field. It is one of the most powerful instruments to show, internally, who is best prepared to play the journalistic game, in Bourdieu’s terms; who has developed a professional *habitus*, what is expected from a journalist. Moreover, exclusive stories help the medium get prestige in relation with other players in the field. Many authors describe how critical they are in the professional culture¹⁵³, as a fundamental tool to mark internal hierarchies (Møller-Hartley, 2013, p. 8). Lascurain remembers a significant detail, telling me that he always preferred

¹⁵³ As myths (Preston, 2009, p. 57) that “produce tears of joy” (Ehrlich, 1995, p. 198)

to have a scoop on Fridays so no other journalist could access his source until next Monday. This made no difference to readers, but the scoop, as Bourdieu explains, is in part for colleagues, not for readers; has an internal function to show strength, ability and competence in one's field. It was a reason to be congratulated by everybody. Nowadays, with the advent of the Net, scoops survive only a few minutes; what used to be their most cherished trophy in the profession, is now almost worthless (I saw even clearer cases of its diminishing value in other newsrooms). Logically, scholars must study which new rules will emerge in the journalistic field to replace this now much less useful instrument. From her research in Denmark, Møller-Hartley (2013) hints at alternative online instruments that are being slowly being shaped and recognised by the field. Meanwhile, journalists are in no-man's land, feeling nostalgia for what they cherished so much and worked so well.

The cultural factors involved in the adoption of the Net were demonstrated when Quincoces told me that the newsroom initially also rejected email through which to be in touch with the world. Their initial response was to dismiss it because they were used to contemporary ways of communicating. Will the introduction of new technologies always be greeted in this way, with our first rejecting what is new only to later accept it as new generations do so? ■

ii. NEWS PRODUCTION AND AGGREGATION

Have journalists at *Efe* started to change their working routines due to the arrival of the Net? “No, there has not been much change in this department because we were already very fast and we still control the details of what we deliver.” Romero thinks that they will need time to adopt new practices, and have only at present adopted the most superficial aspects of what the Net demands. He expects more fundamental changes because “although we use some elements of the Internet, we need much more time to properly say that have adopted the culture of the Net. Many departments at *Efe* use the Net, and they have adopted some new working practices, but I would not describe *Efe* as an Internet medium. In some sections such as National news, we are basically doing what we have always done. To be really innovative, we should be using a specific type of language, shorter headlines, with audio and video incorporated. We will need a generation to fully adopt the Net. However, my generation is the one that firmly occupies positions in media, so it will take time”.

Javier Tovar and his team, when they first took up their positions, conscious of some

criticism from customers, met with different online media to check what was expected from *Efe*. “Customers demanded speed and framework,” says Luis Sanz, who took part in these meetings. At the same time they discovered that “the journalists in charge of online media were not as well trained than those who worked in print media. This lack of qualifications translates into a lack of standards and poor quality of output”.¹⁵⁴ “Our traditional practice had been to offer first a fast lead with just one or two paragraphs announcing a story and much later 600 words of more elaborated text, ready to be published”, explains Javier Lascurian, deputy editor, in charge of the coordination table that manages resources.¹⁵⁵ “Online media managers told us that two paragraphs were too short for them, and 600 words too long and, of course, arriving too late. So we created an intermediate format that we call 'seguirá ampliación’¹⁵⁶ [which I will examine later] that consists of about four paragraphs, enough for a digital medium”. They were also asked to offer a speedy framework for new events. “We have many specialists that are able to frame events into a wider picture. We are doing this more often than before, explaining who is who and analysing events.” Tovar is pressing for more in this line. “Our team has many specialists that are well informed, to fit events into a wider context”, adds Tovar. ■

Formats at *Efe* have been slowly changing due to the emergence of online media, in response to customers' demands. In fact it was a minor modification in the production chain to add a few new written formats, attending only to the most obvious demands of digital media. In contrast, in *EfeTV* they are channelling their energy into creating a new business line based on the Net, where all the formats are new. Their formula is to find one piece of news and sell it in as many formats as possible, with only the original sound, in three levels of resolution, and giving an angle specific to each particular area and its customers.

Romero realises that he now uses the Net as his source of information, that he has adopted some of the Internet's features, but he accepts that a fully Internet-orientated news-agency is something quite different and more advanced, with another type of language, which includes the uses of shorter headlines. He seems to be fatalistic to the fact that his generation will not evolve much further, but he expects that future

¹⁵⁴ Tovar's team were named in November, 2006, and these meetings took place in early 2007.

¹⁵⁵ Adapted to the print culture, the first message was a warning to the newsroom to be aware and wait for more information and the second was the full story, which was needed before the closure of the edition.

¹⁵⁶ 'More information to follow' could be its translation into English.

generations of journalists will feel more comfortable with these changes and innovations. Romero realises that their reluctance, or simply because the difficulties they have in adjusting to the Net, and due to the fact that they are now holding the key posts in media, the arrival of new people with new approaches definitely will have to be postponed. So the staff, the most valuable asset of *Efe*, is also the main hurdle to their adoption of the approach to news coverage that the Internet demands. The social adoption of new technologies seems to be complex, particularly when powerful and important groups of people are at stake. ■

iii. DISTRIBUTION OF CONTENTS

“We are fully aware that we are the first page of a story. For up to three hours, it is possible for *Efe* to be the only source of news online. The further you go from Spain, the more that media depends on us. We were the only source of what was happening in Egypt for days. Now, all the media are there, but it took a week for them to arrive.¹⁵⁷ Today we are still alone in Syria too. In general, we play a crucial role in breaking stories.” More than this, journalists at *Efe* are aware that their initial take on an event will shape the agenda, show the path, influence other media and their approaches. “Sources now know how to influence the agenda: they look at how to create an event that can be reproduced by *Efe* with a certain angle and focus and then they shape the agenda”, explains Jesús García Becerril, who has spent 22 years working at *Efe*.

Raúl Casado is proud to work at *Efe*. “Customers tell us that they carefully follow our production. We are proud to know that our stories influence how other journalists approach them. Our colleagues at other media tell us that their bosses are aware of our points of view, and they are told that, if in any doubt, do what *Efe* does, which is seen as trustworthy. It is easy to see why sources value us: we are reproduced word by word by most media and in the rest our influence is high.” “But in print papers” Tovar explains, “our presence has been diminishing. In the regional press, we still are significant, but as a rule, national newspapers want to be different from others and from online media, so it is almost impossible for us to publish on them. It is impossible to get into the print edition of *El País*, which is frustrating for our people.” Sometimes, Tovar detects that “we influence print newspapers in an awkward way: when we say that we are going to

¹⁵⁷ As I develop the field work, the Tunisian regime has fallen and Mubarak, the Egyptian leader seems to have difficulties in controlling the popular revolt.

cover an event, they discard it from their agendas, because they are searching for issues where they can be original. Because of this, some politicians, in some circumstances, are reluctant to talk to us, because they know that they will not be reproduced in some print media”. Recently however, a story featuring the first statement of an important athlete who had been accused of taking drugs to improve her performance appeared in *Efe*, as did the initial interview of a counsellor in Murcia who had been mauled in the street by a political rival.

They are producing fewer stories than before, however. “We are now publishing about 250 daily national stories when a few years ago we used to produce about 400”. But Tovar, Lascurain and Sanz understand that they “used to be too institutional, offering contents that were often irrelevant”, in Tovar's words. “Today we have a huge impact online. This story that I am now writing will shortly be seen on more than 200 different sites.” Amaya Quincoces gives me proof of this: “look at this story; I wrote it in December, one month ago.” It could be considered an ordinary story, neither very important nor insignificant. “My headline was 'An artificial nose is able to detect Alzheimer and fires'. Today, if I search using Google for my headline ...” – and she begins the search – “... I find 250 pages reproducing it, word for word, in digital media as important as *La Vanguardia*¹⁵⁸ and *El Periódico* of Barcelona, *Terra*, *El Universo* of México, *Noticias* of Navarra, *Deia* of Bilbao, *Vídeo latino*, *Telemetro*, *Neurodifusión*, *Noticias* of San Sebastián, *Noticias de hoy*, *La Nación* of Buenos Aires, *20 minutos*, and so forth.” Teresa, a reporter from the Society and Future section, went to an event this morning organised by a drugs firm. *Efe* would not have gone had a former Spanish Health minister not been making a speech about the health situation in Spain which was potentially interesting. She has just sent the story in and is already looking on Google to see whether other media have reproduced it. Just five minutes later the same headline is already in dozens of digital media, word for word. Each time she checks the Net, the story appears to have been reproduced again and again, but after a while a second headline appears about the same event. Teresa checks their competitor's story, which is from the second largest Spanish news agency, the *Europa Press*. Out of hundreds of different media publications, only two different approaches can be found.

¹⁵⁸ To see the story, as published at *La Vanguardia*:
<http://www.lavanguardia.com/mobi/noticia/54094718137/Crean-una-nariz-artificial-con-mucho-olfato-para-el-Alzheimer-y-los-incendios.html>

Every journalist I spoke with values credibility as the company's major asset. "The media believe what we say", remarks Tovar. Even *Efe*TV accepts that it is *Efe*'s brand, a symbol of credibility, that is behind their recent commercial success. "We are very aware of this and we take care to limit our amount of mistakes", explains Lascurain. Tovar adds that "a few weeks ago, late in the day, a source from Barcelona sent a story about the death of Marcelino Camacho (an historical and well known trade union activist). We received it and called our team in Barcelona who, knowing and distrusting the source, asked us for time to check the original source for themselves. Eventually we found out that, although seriously ill, Camacho was still alive." That day, *Efe* was the only important Spanish news medium not reporting this untrue story. "Once, when the terrorist group the ETA blew up a car in the North of Spain, we reported that a car was blown up causing one death, whilst other media outlets claimed that a policeman had been killed. We asked our Bilbao's office why we were missing the fact that the victim was a policeman. Eventually it was found out that no one was inside the vehicle, so we were right in suspecting that the policemen was not dead; the victim was someone else," remembers Tovar. It is not, however, merely making a mistake that is a problem. In the online world, things are more complex. "Nowadays, mistakes are much worse than before. In the pre-Internet era, we used to have at least two hours to correct a mistake, because a story could be delayed for two hours, after which it was released to a smaller print newspaper readership. This is not the case now. Today, in two hours a story can arrive to more than 200 publications and no one can halt its spread. We always rectify and apologise for our mistakes, but no one publishes our rectifications. Now, a mistake lasts for ever". Tovar concludes: "it is better to be late than mistaken". Amaya Quincoces remembers that "not long ago, I published a story about a book. Soon afterwards the editors called me to thank me and by the way, told me that the book's title was slightly wrong. I had to confess to them that I would not be able to correct it. Of course, I did send a correction, but no-one reproduced it. Now, if we search online, the mistaken name of the book always appears, as it will forever, as if it were the right one. I do not know how to correct it".

"How can we correct wrong news when our client is a machine?" Luis Sanz had a problem this Christmas just passed: "as every year, we received the King's speech hours before it was broadcast on television, and we sent it to our customers, before the real

speech had been given. *Efe* has been doing this for years, without problems: media publications prepare the information and make it public once the broadcast is over, but this year the Casa Real (the Royal Office) called us to complain that someone had ignored the embargo for the second year in a row. When I investigated what had happened I discovered that some of our customers are machines that automatically publish what they receive. As they are not able to control what they publish, we had to stop offering embargoed news. Do we realise what the implications are of having machines for clients?” ■

Stories produced by *Efe* are available to readers all over the world within seconds . Stories never reached this far and quickly before. Journalists are still excited when they show me what happens after sending their articles. Their stories are published more frequently than ever, however the same stories are accessible through different websites. This substantiates the findings of other quantitative studies (Smyrnaio, Marty and Rebillard, 2010; Redden and Witschge, 2010): less offer available at a wider range of sites.

It is very distressing for journalists to find out that the mistakes they publish online remain there forever, and are in fact perpetuated in subsequent editions, as no one will correct them. Then, on the one hand the Net may be seen as a place of permanent content, unchangeable, but at the same time, during the course of this research I have heard many times that the Net is ephemeral, changing too fast. It seems to be a space in which two opposites collide, the ephemeral and the permanent. It seems that users still need more time to get used to the Net, to find out what is short-lived and what is there forever. They need more time to determine whether having certain information online is worthwhile, and how important it is to make this data available on the Net, mingled with millions of other types of data. When a mistake is printed on a newspaper, or when it is broadcast, it is impermanent. How many readers are aware of future corrections? Do they read them, or they are merely corrected in the next print edition as a matter of record and little else? Certainly, journalists still give either too much or too little significance to the Internet and its powers.

The general attitude of journalists at *Efe* implies a fear of incorrect stories, produced to falsify the truth. Despite this alarming journalistic threat, I did not find, in all my field work, complaints about an increase in the number of phoney stories in circulation. They do realise, however, that many events are artificially triggered so that they appear on the agenda and receive space on the news-wires, but they have not yet institutionally

rejected these practices.

At *Efe*, journalists realise that online media publications are more standardised than print media, but there is a controversial price to pay for this: print media, wanting to appear original, often discard information just because it is already known. Does being known equate to being less important, and is it a reason to discard a story?¹⁵⁹ It seems that speed governs online media while the need for originality dominates the print press, meaning that some older stories do not get through into print. Two ways of altering the public sphere. ■

3. PROFESSIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL MATTERS

Managers have decided that every reporter at *Efe* must learn how to use mini cameras, both how to make a 'video-package' and upload the footage online.¹⁶⁰ “We realise that one of our main strengths is our coverage. We are everywhere and whenever an event occurs, we have a reporter on the spot. Before, we were just taking notes and not filming, but sometimes filming is critical. A few months ago, we were allowed to fly over the areas where the Colombian guerrillas operate and we went without a camera. Our reporters were there, just taking notes. We need to solve this absurd problem, so we decided that everybody should learn how to use these mini cameras. Trade unions challenged this decision in the Courts though”, says Javier Tovar. *Efe* won the case, but wounds are still fresh,¹⁶¹ so fresh that a sense of defeat is detectable in Tovar’s tone and body language.

“Our journalists around the world see how things are developing and they accept that they have to use these cameras, that we all have to adapt to new situations, but here in Madrid it is more difficult”, says Marta Cerame, in charge of *EfeTV*. “In our branches things are simpler. Our staff knows that they have to multi-task. We are getting an excellent response from some offices: Beijing, Tokyo and Johannesburg are sending many pieces a day. Here in Madrid however, where responsibilities are more fragmented, people seem to think that these changes will not affect them”. Lourdes Alvarez, deputy-editor in *EfeTV*, outlines some more cultural differences: “in National

¹⁵⁹ See chapter IV about *Diario de Mallorca*.

¹⁶⁰ All managers at *Efe* are journalists, even the President, Alex Grijelmo.

¹⁶¹ *Efe*'s managers had decided in 2009 that journalists, when needed, should use a camera to get footage of events. Trade unions rejected the decision and went to the Courts. On June, 22nd, 2010, the High Court ruled that *Efe*'s decision was legal and proportionate.

news, a forecast is sacred.¹⁶² For us, everything is uncertain, our plans are always evolving. Our teams can leave a press conference and rush to cover an unexpected event. We are very flexible, and at the same time we are training journalists in other areas to use new techniques. It is a big effort for us, and it is not always appreciated". When talking to other areas in *Efe* about the introduction of mini cameras however, their feelings are different. "They [managers] began asking us to use small cameras, but now this seems to have been forgotten", explains Quincoces. "Only trainees use these cameras." Casado and García Becerril, though aware of the company's policy, do not seem to be taking steps to apply it. "Here in Madrid we call a professional cameraman from *EfeTV*" explains the latter. Casado says that "multimedia has arrived when we are too old. I am not able to do things in every platform. We should rule out every journalist having to do stories in every platform: there are those who are good at writing, those who are good at taking pictures and those who are good at shooting footage. We also need good editors who are able to edit multimedia content. I think that the new craft will be that of the multimedia editor, not the multimedia reporter. This weekend I had to report on a killing in Madrid, and I went with my pen and my pad. If I had to use a camera, I would not be able to do the literary side of my job". Javier Lascurain reinterprets the whole approach: "it is a controversial issue, but I would say that what is important is not whether or not people can use a camera but whether or not they are aware that images matter. We have to take images into account and people either ask for a photographer from *EfeTV* or ask for any available footage that may sources have. It is about thinking in images and not only in text." Lascurain believes that this highly contentious practice is being implemented at an international level and perhaps even at a national one, but not much in Madrid. "We are an old journalistic company, where there is not much innovation, where changes are not easy. Here everybody regards the Internet as a change, they know how it works, but most of them do not see themselves taking part in this process. If we could leave aside recent controversies, things could be seen as improving, but the battle for the usage of cameras has distracted us from what is important: thinking in images as well as in words."

Although the issue of multi-tasking is the most controversial, it is not the only one.

¹⁶² Every *Efe*'s section forecasts daily some stories that conform the agenda sent to customers. Alvarez suggests that most sections are too rigid, following their forecasts regardless of what is really happening, which is sometimes more relevant.

There are some open debates about how to react as a medium when confronted with the Net. Lascurain makes it clear: “we are backing the implementation of the Net, as I would say everybody in our profession is. On the one hand, I feel that we are lagging behind, but on the other I do not want to be the first to make changes, I want to be sure about the steps I take. I am scared of being dragged along by the flow of events”.

What about Twitter? “We do not know” says Tovar. “We are not sure if we should compete with Twitter. It offers very incomplete information, with limited scope and is very fragmented. At this moment, I would prefer a wider approach to events, as we are used to offering. When, a few months ago, the socialist party in Madrid held an internal election, there was a lot of partial information on Twitter that some publications were using as a source, but we chose to wait so that we could inform people about the whole picture, as soon as we had global hints. In the end we were right to do this because what was being said on Twitter, from the very restricted available angles, turned out to be completely wrong. So we have to be careful.”

For Tovar, “despite all these new technologies, 15 years after the emergence of the Net, journalism still is about selecting, evaluating, ordering and creating hierarchies. Good journalism has an ethical code, a way of explaining and ordering things. This has not changed with the Internet. We offer a framework into which an event can be inserted. This is our natural role as communicators. A blogger can do many things, but they cannot give much of a framework. This becomes absolutely clear, for instance, when we talk about science. It applies to every area, even football, but in science it can be seen more clearly: information must be selected for its social significance and summarised in a comprehensive way. This all needs a professional technique.”

At *Efe* I find that very traditional journalistic attitudes prevail: Jesús García Becerril does not think that the Internet offers a better quality of news. “Everything now seems very light. It is a social dynamic and the Net is a part of it. We have an ocean of knowledge, but it is just one centimetre thick. I do not see a higher quality of news on the Internet and I certainly prefer the print paper. It is deeper. Online is faster, more superficial, less analytical and more frivolous. In my opinion, “59 seconds” is nothing.”¹⁶³

Luis Sanz nails it down: “This comes with the television. It began by mixing facts and

¹⁶³ This is the name of a Spanish TV program where personalities have 59 seconds to comment about topical issues.

opinion, with gatherings in which people talk about everything but know nothing. Later on, it mixed this formula with entertainment, which is an explosive cocktail and a very dangerous one. I think that the Internet is part of this process. A few weeks ago, *El País* published a story about Belén Esteban, which was very alarming.¹⁶⁴ *El País* had said that these kind of stories had no place in their pages.¹⁶⁵ Eventually, they allow this sort of content, alleging that it is a sociological phenomenon. For me Belen Esteban is not a phenomenon but merely a woman who tells people about her private life, nothing else.”

■

Journalists at *Efe* are against having to multi-task, but they made a claim against the company and lost. At the main newsroom in Madrid, an observer may say that the workers had won because very few journalists use cameras. Away from the main office however, most of journalists write, film and edit their stories, whilst on the second floor in the same building in Madrid, a new business is emerging at *EfeTV*, based on multi-tasking. I was told that in small offices, away from Madrid, members of staff are more prone to adopting new practices. This seems to be because a less powerful set of rules exists, which, together with a weaker established procedure, means that attitudes are not so strictly reinforced by mutual interaction. There is less of a demanding environment, which makes changes easier to take root. The collective *habitus* is weaker. An idea pervades the newsroom: our society is going through an age in which information is represented in a simpler and more superficial way. García Becerril talks about the wider availability of knowledge, a trend of which the Internet is a key part. Journalists, despite their insistence that they are not against the introduction of new technology, regard the Net as another step in this direction, and blame television as the main culprit. Twitter is emerging as a new way of circulating information and their attitude towards it is defensive: they want to wait and see how it develops. Lascurain explains that they are afraid of innovation and Tovar accepts that they are not ready to make decisions in this area. He has an opinion about how biased its view-point is. *Efe* makes content available on Twitter, but they do not offer special reports via a twitter-like application. This attitude towards Twitter could be seen as typical of a first approach to a new way of doing things: they are waiting to see how it evolves. Nowadays, no online medium still uses Twitter on a daily basis. *El País*, for instance, uses an application of their own called

¹⁶⁴ She is the former wife of a bull fighter, who is very often on TV, representing a part of the Spanish public that is not very highly valued.

¹⁶⁵ *El País* has generally been considered a very rigorous and elitist medium. It could be compared in Spain to what *Le Monde* is in France, and probably Bourdieu's comments about its place in the field, as a reference, could apply.

Eskup, similar to Twitter, and *El Mundo* seldom employs it at all. It is the same approach that used to be seen when in the past in other newsrooms, which are compact social groups, when confronted with innovations. Their first reaction to innovation is waiting, and taking action only when other companies challenge their position. As Bourdieu describes it, it is those who are more marginal within a field that are more prone to taking risks (Neveu, 2007, p. 337), those who value what can be won more than worrying about what can be lost.

I would stress Tovar's words about what is his profession about: "journalism still is about selecting, evaluating, ordering and creating hierarchies. Good journalism has an ethical code, a way of explaining and ordering things. This has not changed with the Internet." It is a definition that leaves aside many behaviours widely seen at the newsroom but keeps the core concept of the profession, in order to renegotiate its place in the new emerging communication picture. Coming back to the essential and basic ideas, to confront new challenges. ■

4. THE AUDIENCE AND ITS INTERACTIONS.

"*Efe* could easily convert itself into an online medium. Some of our competitors have chosen to offer their content to the general public, but we have decided not to do so. We work as a wholesaler to other media, so our public web-page offers content that does not compete. It is our conscious decision", explains Tovar, in this case echoing the board's official position.

Having said that the agency is not in direct touch with its eventual readers, journalists at *Efe* are concerned and critical about how things are evolving. Javier Lascurain stresses the fact that readers are usually anonymous online. He uses a private story to demonstrate what concerns him: "A few years ago I moved to a house in an area of Madrid where everyone shared an Internet site which catered for our individual interests. It was simply amazing the way in which everybody was kind and friendly during our daily life, but when using the Net, those same friendly neighbours, under the protection of anonymity, became nasty and frequently aggressive, acting in a way that they never would dare to face to face. I tend to distrust the Net as a place for interaction, where people, protected by anonymity, behave in this appalling manner", says Lascurain.

Amaya Quincoces, when asked about how feasible direct contact between her sources

and her readers is, says categorically that a relationship between the scientific world and general readers is unimaginable to her. “Not only because of how readers are, but also because scientists are highly specialist. My sources usually do not understand what my job entails. They do not easily accept that it is my job to translate their studies into simpler language, avoiding their very technical words”.

“There is much talk about citizen journalism, but today, when you have the revolts in Tunis and Egypt, where can you get the information you are seeking? I have been looking at some new ways of doing journalism that are being experimented online by the University of Columbia. And I compared it with Reuters: well, to put it simply there is no way to compare. One side is just a person with a camera and the other is the whole vision of Reuters, which involves finding important locations and giving an intelligent understanding of events.” Romero has been looking at many sources about these conflicts but he prefers distinctly journalistic ones. “I would not like to give you the impression that I am against change in journalism, but the reality is this. I am quite critical about the way we do things at *Efe*, but I have to believe that our credibility is still outstanding.” Javier Lascurain, on his part, thinks that the mediator is still necessary. “A journalist can put information in a wider framework. If the reader has a special interest in something, they can now go directly to the source. In these cases, the journalist is not needed, but in most cases, journalists help users to get a sense of what is happening, to understand it, to avoid lies and see things in a certain order. This is our role: to explain, relate and put into context. Today, everybody could access the Tunis government's web site, but they could not get an idea of what is happening in Tunis from this source. What credibility do we have? That which we create. Users are aware of who we are, who is behind us. They are more shrewd than what we think”. ■

Efe has no direct involvement with readers, due to their policy of selling their products only to the media. Nevertheless, most journalists do not give much credibility to the kind of content that comes from ordinary citizens, nor or to their comments. They think that ordinary readers need a mediator. They are strongly in favour of their mediating function, which they think is key to making sense of this overflow of information. As in many other journalistic outlets, they are very concerned by online anonymity, or more precisely by the lack of certainty about online identities. In the transition (or journey) that Seth Lewis (2012) describes from a traditional journalism to a new online form of dialogue where

citizens have a remarkable function, members of this newsroom, as a group of people representing the centre of the Spanish professional field, are close to the departing point, reluctant to giving audiences a role. I found very few exceptions to this attitude, mostly from the television section, that is internally away from the centre, or from isolated branch offices, where the influence of the main newsroom values is minimal. ■

5. CONCLUSION

Efe is a news agency and as such, it could be fully on the Net. Instead, it prefers selling only to the media and disseminating its content as ever. In this sense, they are not affected by the Net. Nevertheless, they are: there are mingled with their colleagues, within a world that is linked by the Net, and their customers, only news media, publish their stories online almost in real time all around the world. The external environment, its sources, its contacts, its clients, and eventually its users, all have changed due to the Net: they are demanding multi-media formats, at a greater speed and in different sequences. In this sense, *Efe* has been deeply affected by the Net, despite their reluctance.

Attitudes, behaviours and values in relation with the Net are very revealing because *Efe* is probably the most important newsroom in Spain, with the best-paid journalists, who are among the most influential. In Bourdieu's terms, they are a reference in the field, the mirror for other colleagues to find ways to play the game, to interpret the deep changes associated with the Net and its culture. So, if someone could draw a map of the Spanish journalistic field, such as those that Bourdieu liked to produce about social groups in France¹⁶⁶, the team at *Efe* surely would be near the centre, where you would expect to find those players more resilient to changes, surer about their role, with more confidence in themselves, where they have a stronger and more rigid *habitus*. In fact, their written section still works as it always has done: a light difference in formats, but nothing else. Casado does not hesitate to tell me that he just employs a pad when reporting a story.

Efe is not selling an integrated product, with references to what they are doing in other formats. Each service is separate: first comes the written section, then the television; on other tune the radio service and even another section produces twitter feeds when they fancy. The coordination table, created a few months ago, is a small step towards

¹⁶⁶ See for instance *Distinction*, where Bourdieu affronts the challenge of mapping social preferences (1984/1979, pp.128-129, 262, 340, 423, 427 or 452).

facilitating at least the internal exchange of information, but a genuine and full integration will have to wait longer. *Efe* is many steps ahead of *Diario de Mallorca* in terms of its relationship with the Net, but still miles away from being flexible enough to adopt what the Internet may mean. Even with a narrow interpretation of it as Romero's, they fail to meet the target.¹⁶⁷

The main newsroom of *Efe* is full of individuals with great amounts of knowledge and experience, but also of ingrained routines, inertia, and resistance to change. They are a privileged part of the industry, being self-managed, able to fix standards in the profession and in control of what is happening. They live, however, with the same differences of opinion as every other news publication: they need to get acquainted with the Net, its features and the dynamics associated with them, its lack of depth, its immediacy, and all of the new and still evolving rules.

One of these new dynamics, which is a result of the Internet's immediacy, is the emergence of worthless news that every paper and news forum covers. They question its purpose and accept that it should not happen, but they still do along with it. It is the safe option, the one that carries no risk, the one that everybody else would choose. The one that, viewed from outside the comfort and assurance of belonging to a field, an observer could have expected.

Their contact with this new technology is being experienced under the heavy weight of the journalistic field and its collective and individual *habitus*: only those actors living on the margins of the field (the television area, for instance, who were in fact not competing with rivals due to a lack of investment), are taking riskier positions. Those in charge of the company, those who are aware of what is happening with bigger competitors and realise that they need to be flexible; those who work in small groups and are more isolated, are all more open to familiarising themselves with new features. Other agents, such as Romero, who deal with stylistic norms, can modernise their work faster, with fewer conflicts, because his area is smaller, and is not interlinked with others. Casado, who last weekend would have benefited from using a mini-camera to cover an event, accepts that he is too old to change his working habits and he is not going to produce videos. That is not to say that he is old, but he is too attached to his entrenched traditional practices; he risks nothing by resisting change, and he is even

¹⁶⁷ Romero, during the interview, told me that "although we use some elements of the Internet, we need much more time to properly say that have adopted the culture of the Net".

seen by other agents in his field as someone loyal to their collective *doxa*. The main newsroom, as Cerame says, may think that changes coming from new technologies will not affect them, but they will. It is unavoidable. She defends a more open position, believing for instance that *EfeTV* can only profit from this situation. In fact, this is the only area of the company generating a great deal more income than before, a reward for those who are defending an evolution in the field of journalism and accepting new rules. Romero believes that they should adapt to what the Net demands, to its language and its rules but his generation, firm in its position, breaks the change. The next generation must wait a few years more. This is a much more significant team than that at *Diario de Mallorca*, but it experiences the same tensions, resistance, and complex processes.

From a journalistic point of view, Efe shows interesting developments in relation to the very complex dynamics of online immediacy, the role of sources and how new genres, practices and controls must be created to preserve what journalists believe is their social function and the core of their values: truth, objectivity and reliability. On the side of what their attitudes tell us, it should be emphasised that big groups as Efe's main newsroom tend to be conservative when confronted with new challenges; they do understand these phenomena quite well but, in spite of reacting by adopting what is required, they look for every reason, no matter how minor it could be, to resist change, not wishing to evolve or take risks.

Chapter VI

El País

A struggle against the clock

“When someone on Twitter has a number of followers, because what he says is interesting to someone else, he is a prescriber; someone who is valued for their opinions, comments and suggestions. [...] This is what journalists used to be at this newspaper. They used to work in a quasi monopolistic context. When someone was good enough, then they could come and work at this newspaper. But once here, they were shielded from criticism, from their readers. [...] This is why journalists nowadays need to claim their role, as mediators. The media has become an institution, like another political or business power and they are more controlled and politically correct.”

Gumersindo Lafuente¹⁶⁸.

¹⁶⁸ Personal interview with author on February, 7th, 2011

1. THE CONTEXT OF ON-LINE NEWS PRODUCTION

Unexpectedly, my first contact with *El País*' present situation took place days before my arrival at its offices, on an industrial estate, east of Madrid. It was a morning in January, 2011, while I was at *El Mundo*, the *El País*' arch-rival. There appeared a breaking-news

Who is who

Gumersindo Lafuente. Deputy editor-in-chief. Internet edition and strategy.

Berna González Harbour. Deputy editor-in-chief. Society and Culture.

Borja Echeverría. Editor. Internet edition.

Fernando Gualdoni. Editor. International.

Javier Casqueiro. Editor. Spain.

Iker Seisdedos. Editor. Culture.

Guillermo Altares. Editor. Internet edition.

Luis Doncel. Reporter. Economy and Finance.

story stating that PRISA (the company that publishes *El País*) had decided to make 2500 of its employees redundant. Details were to be announced later, after the end of my field work. It was the second most important decision to be taken by the new owners, Liberty Acquisition Holdings Corp, an American

fund that had taken PRISA over from a few Spanish families that had had to exchange most of their shares for cash in order to manage the company's huge debts (PRISA, 2010).¹⁶⁹ When days later I began my field work at *El País*¹⁷⁰, the staff did not yet know who would eventually be made redundant, but they had already been informed about what the change of shareholders would mean for them: an internal revolution, huge spending cuts and the sale of some businesses, not yet specified.

El País was founded in May, 1976, formally still under the old Right-wing regime that dominated Spain for most of the XXth century, although the death of Franco, the dictator of forty years, in November 1975, was widely perceived as a clear sign of its fatal decline. Gathering the capital needed to open the newspaper was a daunting task but, on the other hand, being established at that time, *El País* was easily associated with the new political environment that transformed Spain into a democracy. Being related with Europe and an emerging democracy, *El País* was seen as a medium without links to the past regime and, profiting from this association and producing a high quality newspaper, in less than ten years, it became the best-selling daily paper, and by far, the most influential (Pini, 1999, n.p).

When analysing newspapers in Southern Europe, we should not ignore the highly

¹⁶⁹ Previously, from January, 2011, CNN+, a 24 hours TV news channel, owned by PRISA, ceased to broadcast.

¹⁷⁰ February, 2011.

political role that scholars give to the media (Varela, 2004; Labio 2001), as being a key part of the political system and usually linked to certain interests.

The Spanish transition to democracy was a[n] [...] elite managed transition. In the absence of fully formed democratic institutions, “media served as conduits for information about the strategy for political change[...]”. This new pluralist press [...] emerged in a commercial context, though with strong political ties. The key event was the launching of *El País* by the commercial media conglomerate PRISA in 1976 (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 103).

El País was quickly seen as a rather leftist medium. In 1982, “when the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE, the Spanish acronym) came to power [...], PRISA, which also included the most important radio network, publishing, and eventually television interests, became fairly closely aligned with the new governing elite” (Hallin and Mancini, 2004, p. 104).

Carlos Barrena describes the media arena in Spain as the confrontation of two ideological trends. On the left, the most important group is PRISA, with *El País* acting as its spokesperson (Barrera, 2005). De Miguel and Pozas, who once identified the two biggest communication groups in Spain, posit that “despite this there is not a full identification of journalistic companies with political parties, PRISA [owning *El País*] and *El Mundo* [see Chapter VII] became solid socialist and conservative supporters respectively” (2009, p. 46).

On May, 4th, 1996, exactly 20 years after the first print edition was published, *El País* began its online edition. In June, just a month later, *El Mundo*, its main rival, did the same. Soon, both newspapers reproduced their print rivalry online. Initially, *El Mundo* gained more users, but in 1998 and 1999, as their electronic editions settled down, *El País*, as was the case with the print paper, almost doubled *El Mundo*'s figures. It was the widest distance ever reached between them, although it was achieved at a time when their Spanish daily users did still not reach 100.000 and were increasing at a spectacular speed. As it was happening with mainstream media in many other countries, they became very popular sites (Díaz Noci, 2001, p. 7).

Towards 2002, both news sites had again almost the same amount of readers. *El País* then made two bold decisions, through the subsidiary operating its online page: the first was to hire, in September 2002, on the same day, 25 of the 40 staff on *El Mundo*'s

Internet workforce, including Mario Tascón, the editor¹⁷¹ (Díaz Noci, 2005, pp. 32-33). Months later, *El País* adopted the second decision: to charge for its online edition, as few other media around the world did at that time. It was a bold gamble, as yet unseen in Spain, but one which had a precedent from when the *New York Times* had decided upon a similar move (Gunter, 2003, p.44)¹⁷². At the same time, *El País* stopped auditing its online edition. The result of these decisions was a significant fall in the number of users and in the income from online adverts¹⁷³. Three and a half years later, in 2005, *El País* reverted to offering a free online edition (Cea Esteruelas, 2009¹⁷⁴), but it had to rebuild its readership from scratch. Now, in 2011, *El País* has not still caught up with its main rival, although it is approaching it.¹⁷⁵

In 2008, Europe, but in particular Spain, entered into a deep financial crisis that impacted heavily on the advertising industry. In the midst of this crisis *El País*, being second in the online market and losing readers of its print edition, began an internal update, in order to catch up with the market.

Gumersindo Lafuente is the deputy editor-in-chief, in charge of the online edition and its strategy. He is a journalist that was part of the staff from 1986 until 1995 when he was hired by *El Mundo*. There, he was editor-in-chief of its online edition. “When I left in 2006, *El Mundo* online was the Spanish speaking world leader”. Then Lafuente opened his own business, *Soitu*. “*Soitu* was a new way of giving information online, but the financial crisis condemned us to closure. Our sponsors left us.” Then, a year ago [in December, 2009] Lafuente came back to *El País*, as the person responsible for its online strategy. “I came here with ten people, just one journalist and a team of nine software developers”.

Lafuente laments that despite the fact that *El País* has had a presence online for 13

¹⁷¹ *El Mundo* published many articles against its arch-rival, and in the end brought a claim to the Justice against the move, but their action was dismissed. See the conflict as published then at *El Mundo*: <http://www.elmundo.es/navegante/2000/09/18/demanda.html>. [Accessed on July, 30th, 2011.]

¹⁷² The *New York Times* have had many policies relating to this subject, changing quite often. By the end of the decade it was free again and since 2011 it has again erected a pay wall, now a metered access system (Sweeney, 2011).

¹⁷³ Gumersindo Lafuente, Borja Echeverría and Fernando Baeta to the author in personal interviews on February, 7th; February, 8th and January 31st, 2011.

¹⁷⁴ Article not paginated, describing how income fell during the almost four years that they charged for access.

¹⁷⁵ The circulation of the print edition of *El País* in 2010 declined by 5 per cent, remaining the leading Spanish newspaper. The number of monthly unique users for the online edition of *El País* was 17.8 million in 2010 – not audited by an independent bureau, but declared by the publisher –, well behind the 26.6 million of *El Mundo* in January, 2011. (OJD, 2011) (PRISA, 2010).

years, “[when I came] here I had to begin from scratch. *El País* had chosen the wrong strategy. The entire online edition had been externalised.¹⁷⁶ There were two companies, two newsrooms. Not only the technological operation but also the journalistic team was out of the print newspaper's reach. I had also created an independent newsroom when I was at *El Mundo* years ago but the tactics that were correct in 2000 are not viable anymore.” He explains the new strategy in plain terms: “we want to have just one newsroom, one structure, able to create content for a digital platform that can be accessed through a computer, a tablet, or a mobile and that every 24 hours produces a print edition.” Lafuente spent the last thirteen months developing many internal changes but there is still a long way to go. “Of course, an economy in crisis adds more difficulties to our task. It is not the same taking these tough decisions when your company is drawing in profits than when you are accumulating losses and more losses”. After this period of reforms and changes, there is now just one team at *El País*. The former online operator has given all its journalists to the publisher of *El País*, and now, in the middle of the main newsroom, a team of very young newcomers are working 24 hours a day, while the print staff, after leaving the central place to them, are step by step adapting to these intruders that dare to give orders to them. “We are 30 people here. Five in each shift, 24 hours a day”, explains Borja Echeverría.¹⁷⁷

Lafuente's plan is slow and complex to implement. “We are now restructuring the journalistic organisation”, explains Berna González Harbour (45 years old with a degree in Journalism from the Madrid University) editor for the Society section.¹⁷⁸ “We began these changes last September, the deepest shake-up in this newsroom in 35 years, but we had to postpone it because we got the Wikileaks papers that were very time-consuming.¹⁷⁹ We will now restart this process however. What are we aiming to do? We want more people working for the web, focusing on creating content that could be published as easily on the web or on the paper”. For her, “the biggest difficulties were on the part of the company. We were separated from the online service for years. They did not realise that we should be working together.”

Borja Echeverría is the only journalist that came to the online edition in 2009, with

¹⁷⁶ Prisacom, the former *El País* website operator, was part of PRISA, although did not share premises or structures.

¹⁷⁷ Participant observation and personal interview on February 9th, 2011.

¹⁷⁸ Personal interview with author on February 8th, 2011.

¹⁷⁹ On these days, Wikileaks published through a group of newspapers, many secret and mostly diplomatic documents revealing American practices, attitudes and opinions of enemies and allies.

Gumersindo Lafuente. Echeverría and Lafuente were part of *El Mundo* and *Soitu's* managing teams. He is now deputy editor for the online edition. He is literally running around the centre of the newsroom, with a tablet, on which he is constantly checking the *El País* digital edition and those of its competitors. It is about 10 in the morning and only a reduced team of journalists in charge of the web are already working, as are a few others, scattered around the room. Borja is still relaxed and speaks without the stress that will dominate him and the online newsroom the rest of the day. “When we arrived here, we began fixing our foundations. We stopped producing the very poor global online edition that *El País* had previously been publishing. We are now focusing on producing a very competitive Spanish one and then we will go global.” Echeverría gives me a crude description of the current state of affairs: “the print newspaper is performing badly, but we have to route for the Net. The future lies there, sure. The technology [we found here when we joined] was obsolete, too time-consuming. We still have many things to change. At *El Mundo* we used to have 20 people developing what we needed.” Echeverría compares the newspaper's situation to a surfer waiting for a wave. “We need to be prepared in advance for the arrival of the wave. If we take decisions when we see the wave on the horizon, it will be too late. So, we are focusing on the Net. Here, we will earn some money, but the print newspaper will have very big losses for years because their industrial investment has been so important”.

Lafuente explains that his first goal was opening the newsroom to new technology. “We created Eskup [a social network like Twitter, but accepting up to 240 characters¹⁸⁰], a way to push journalists to immersing themselves in this world. We now post online comments about what is happening in the world. We found a newsroom here that was behaving as if the Internet did not exist, and we are now in the process of opening ourselves up to readers. Online users can post questions to any one of us, even the editor-in-chief. This morning we will cover the launch of the new pro-independence Basque party [called Sortu, that was to be presented in Bilbao, Northern Spain] live on Eskup”.¹⁸¹ “I regard journalism as a part of the future of innovation. Technological innovation is decisively influencing journalism; it is taking journalism to new frontiers. In the past, technology had to be bought, journalistic companies had to spend a lot of money on equipment, but nowadays we can invent applications which are relatively

¹⁸⁰ Twitter accepts just 140 characters.

¹⁸¹ Eskup is a meaningless Spanish adaption of the English word 'scoop'.

affordable. Journalistic companies used to invest heavily in order to gain a competitive advantage over their rivals due to this investment. Not anymore”, Lafuente adds. “This is not a time to be conservative. We have to take risks and, if we are wrong, correcting our decisions immediately. We are now preparing the next huge step in changing everybody's working hours that currently revolve around the print edition. We want a 24 hour team that works continuously on the web edition and also produces a print newspaper every 24 hours. The paper will also change. There will be less advertisements, because once the crisis be over, they will not come back to print newspapers. The print edition will change more than the online one. We will need a much more specialised team, not big, but very professional and able to prepare a better written daily newspaper. It will be more analytical, with better pictures [showing me a general view of the Spanish Parliament, in an important page of today's edition¹⁸²], where this one should never be published.” Lafuente remarks that “print newspapers have been simplifying their content, trying to be more visual, but I would say that they will need to become more rigorous, more analytical. They will be more expensive than they are now. They will change for the better.”

One of the journalists – who asked me not to mention his name because of his diagnosis of his company's situation – in reference to *El País'* decision in 2002 to charge users for accessing their online edition, told me that “we thought then that our newspaper and our brand would be enough to make people pay. This was a mistake, it was arrogance. Now we are rushing back to the point at which we were some years ago, beginning again. In the end, after this storm, we will be lucky if we save the newspaper. Of course, as we have already had to sell our television business, we will lose most of our media companies, from *As* [a sports newspaper] to *Cinco Días* [a business paper].”

Lafuente does not think that “the problem is defining the business model; that is a misunderstanding. I agree that it could be a problem, but first we need to establish the product model. If we do not know what product we are going to sell, we cannot decide what to charge for it or even if to charge anything at all. The print newspaper worked to a model for many years. It was clear and it worked quite well, but its financial model has changed without companies fully realising it. We initially made our income from newspaper sales, then from advertisements, later by the sale of books, movies and CD's,

¹⁸² The story is about a debate in Parliament but the picture is an old one, showing members of the chamber seated.

and very recently through selling knives and kitchenware. So we are now using the newspaper as a commercial vehicle, a clear evidence that something is not working properly. Or, to put it more clearly, it means that our traditional model is unworkable. The big media groups have lost the most important part of their income: cars, jobs and real estate ads, meaning they have lost their financial independence. In fact, the publicity migrated from print papers, but not to online ones. Not a single important player in the Internet arena comes from the journalistic business: not AOL, Yahoo, My Space, nor Google, but all of them heavily influence how journalism operates.” Lafuente is rushing because he still has to write an article for tomorrow's print edition, about the selling of *Huffington Post* to AOL. “It was the third largest journalistic site in the world, after the *New York Times* (one thousand journalists) and *Daily Mail* (more than 200) and with a very, very light structure. This is what AOL has bought.”

This sense of urgency is what also emerges from Echeverría's words, when he analyses the market: “*El Mundo* is a leader with a focus on the number of news stories being produced and on their immediacy. It is not heavily ideological. What would be the sense of *ABC* [a newspaper leaning to the right (Barrera, 2005)] doing the same? If I were in their skin, I would be very rightist, trying to look for another reader. In this world, being secondary to someone with the same product is useless”. ■

To understand how the online edition of *El País* works we must be familiar with its context as a business, because it affects everything. (The financial field over the journalistic one, as I already saw at *Diario de Mallorca* or *Efe*.) It seems that the most influential newspaper in Spain has more problems than time to solve them. The Spanish downturn has dramatically reduced the income from advertising in all their businesses; has made many subscribers leave their satellite television services, and, on top of this, the print newspaper, which is the real stronghold of the group, is losing readers in droves. This deep crisis has provoked its financial collapse, but a broker from the United States has come to the rescue and now controls the group. They had no yet taken (as of February 2011) decisions in relation with *El País*, but have announced 2,500 job losses at the corporation as a whole.

In this stormy context, Gumersindo Lafuente is convinced that the future is online. They need to reach the first post in this race (with *El Mundo*) because, as Echeverría reckons, the runner-up (not to mention lower positions) is “irrelevant”. So, *El País* is working hard and fast to be competitive and lead the market. There are low barriers to entry in this

new business, so Echeverría figures out that newcomers to the Net, with minimal investment, could easily compete with *El País*. Lafuente admits that by saying that for AOL, the *Huffington Post*, which has a very loose structure, is more attractive than the *New York Times*, with a thousand staff, he means that *El País* is in itself a problematic business. These words describe a complete new business logic, in which the print edition is not seen as a valuable asset. This is probably not, however, what the staff thinks about their work and medium.

They accept that *El País* is late in reorganising its priorities (it missed 13 years), that it took the wrong path, wrongly separating companies. They realise now that managers misunderstood the new platform, believing that their solid brand and prestige would be enough to legitimise charging users for accessing the website. “Arrogance” is the word that one journalist chose to describe the previous attitude of his company.

Among the staff, feelings are sour. For 13 years they had been behaving as if the Internet did not exist and now they are being asked to switch immediately, from working as they always had to becoming a fully-fledged online medium in weeks. They now have to work quickly to establish a sense of competitiveness. A team of just-arrived youngsters now make all of the decisions and are commanding the vessel. At least the team now know what is required of them: to produce stories 24 hours a day, to be delivered on many different platforms. I found that the mood was one of huge cultural shock, at the same time that they are also aware that 2.500 people will be made redundant.

What is really unique at *El País* is that this newsroom has a clear sense of having been the Spanish journalistic reference for years (it transpires in each comment), and that it is now under the heavy pressure of sorting hurdles in order to become also an online reference. This pressure upon the newsroom (which translates into job cuts, and fears about the future) makes changes really different, by influencing attitudes, softening critiques. This is a medium where this evolution should take place in a much shorter period of time, and with a heavier financial risk upon it. ■

2. THE JOURNALISTIC PROCESS.

i. INFORMATION GATHERING

Until a few months ago, the *El País'* main newsroom regarded the online edition as an alien medium. They were neither involved with it nor in touch with how it worked. They prepared the print edition and, the next day, someone else would publish it online, without changes. The team in charge of uploading it was not a part of their company, or

even in the same building, which was very symbolic. They also had a different pay scale.¹⁸³ Since 2010 however, things have changed. Now there is only one newsroom and they all work for both the print and online editions. At least in theory.

Despite this, they were familiar with the Net as users, at least in terms of gathering information online, checking facts, getting in touch, using email and getting access to sources. They know and use social networks like everybody else, hence they are culturally aware of some of Net's implications, its speed, the way that it promotes participation and so forth. They read news online and comment on stories. They, as journalists at one of the most influential publications in Spain, are consumers of online news just like everybody else, they do not only produce it. An awkward situation then, which is illustrated by the fact that, when asked about which section she is in charge of, Berna González Harbour still uses the print edition as her reference: "the pages in the middle". Nowadays, the print edition has a wide array of content under the label "Vida" [Life] that includes what used to be Society, Culture and Arts. Even by Spanish standards, *El País* has a very general definition of Society, including Health, Science, Education, Religion and almost everything that is not Finance, Politics (in a very strict sense) and Sports. Despite the fact that she is hurrying to prepare a new blog about Women, many decades working offline have made a strong impact on her understanding of journalism.

At the reception hall, a big frame hangs on the wall, containing the front page of the first print edition of *El País* on May 4th, 1976. It reads that the next day "Areilza [the Spanish Foreign Minister] will visit Morocco". I ask Berna if a story like this one, announcing an official journey, would be viable today. "No, of course, but we discarded these stories even before the arrival of the Net". She explains how they distribute the content for both editions: "we are looking for a print newspaper with analysis rather than instant facts", implying that this sort of news is better suited to the Net. What does the print version of *El País* do with stories that have been on the Net all day? "It is quite heavy-going finding a different approach for the print edition. We are aware that tomorrow we need to offer more analysis and deeper content. Tomorrow we have to offer the two best pages with information about pollution in Madrid and Barcelona".¹⁸⁴ The same journalists are asked to produce two different approaches for each story. Berna rejects

¹⁸³ What I had already seen in *Diario de Mallorca*.

¹⁸⁴ After days with neither wind nor rain, Madrid and Barcelona were registering high levels of pollution.

my suggestion that their Internet content comes only from news-wires. “No, we try to use only our own sources. If the team in charge of breaking-news finds something that is being said on news-wires and we do not have this information, they call our specialist. Well, sometimes we use agencies: this past weekend a girl was killed in an accident at an amusement park in Ciudad Real and we had to use wires because we have no correspondent there, but it is exceptional.”

“Look at this, Bernie”. A journalist from the Culture section addresses Bernie, showing a story on a screen about the presence of e-books in public libraries. “Haven’t we already seen this?” They check on Google. “Yes, it was in *El Día*, Tenerife.” “Well, it does not matter. Do it. Look for a picture.”¹⁸⁵ Half an hour ago a ranking about the richest football clubs in Europe arrived, a returning story. “As always?” asks Borja, who was again in the area. “Yes, first Real Madrid, second Barcelona”. “Check to see if Manchester has overtaken Barcelona”. The information has already been produced, and the headline says that Barcelona is getting nearer Madrid, which remains still first in the ranking.¹⁸⁶

“Weak?” I ask Borja, in relation to the amount and interest of stories on the web. “Yeah. Too many, too dull. Let’s see what can be changed. This story about pollution... is it worth it?” “Not really”. “When is Castro [the president of the association of Spanish municipalities] going to the Ministry of Environment?” “Now, they are in the meeting right now”, says someone. The telephone rings: “Tell me Georgina”. Georgina Higuera is the special correspondent at Cairo, still covering the riots there after more than 15 days. “She is preparing her Eskup for today”.

Luis Doncel works in the Business and Finance section. He, like many other journalists, entered *El País* after studying a Masters course that the newspaper, in partnership with a public university, teaches in Madrid. He has just turned 34 and has spent only three years at *El País*. He considers the importance of the Net: “before we would have had to use a very powerful documentation service to get just part of the information that we can access nowadays thanks to the Net. It has been a huge change. Still, the Lehman Brothers failure, for instance, occurred despite the information circulated on the Net.

¹⁸⁵ Final version of this story, here:

http://www.elpais.com/articulo/cultura/prestamo/libros/digitales/llega/bibliotecas/publicas/elpepucul/20110209elpepucul_15/Tes [accessed March, 23th, 2011]

¹⁸⁶ To see this news online:

http://www.elpais.com/articulo/deportes/Barcelona/acecho/Real/Madrid/lista/ricos/elpepudep/20110210elpepudep_5/Tes [accessed March, 23th, 2011]

Many important things can develop outside of the Internet, and not only small stories either.”

At midday, Borja Echeverría comes to the table from which the online edition is being coordinated, waving his tablet while asking Juan Carlos: “Why we did not get the resignation of this American Congressman?” The story, probably from a news-agency, concerns a Republican congressman who published an online friendship request, written in a seductive way whilst he was showing a picture of him, half naked. It is also on *El Mundo*'s home page, with a picture.

“Call Washington.”

“They are resting. It is late night there”.

“Well, I'd rather wait and offer something better than the content that others are publishing at the moment”. Addressing me, he adds that “the later you publish some stories, the better they must be”.¹⁸⁷

“We find stories on news-wires or we are called by journalists whilst they are working and then we decide”, explains Juan Carlos, who has problems finding time for me, due to the telephone calls, emails and journalists who keep talking to him. A young reporter from the Madrid section approaches him:

“Izquierda Unida (the most leftist party in the regional assembly) offered Lissavetzky a place on their lists”.¹⁸⁸

“Okay, do it. It could be interesting”.

In less than 30 minutes, the story arrives, is checked and published without any comment.

It is now 12.15am.

“A plane crash”. Someone gives the alert.

“How many deaths?” is the first question from the table.

“12 according to *Efe*”. Another journalist at other table says “3 according to the *BBC* and *RTE*”.

“Where?”

“Cork, Ireland.”

¹⁸⁷ Seven hours later the resignation was still not on *El País*, but the unfolding events in Egypt were so important as to warrant an eventual change of plan.

¹⁸⁸ Jaime Lissavetzky is one of Madrid's two socialist leaders that are competing for the party's leadership. The other is Tomás Gómez, who has decided not to include his rival in the lists, so in an opportunistic move, the leftist party offered this place, in order to get on the news.

Someone from the International section of the print paper arrives and informs Juan Carlos about the accident. “Yes, thanks. We already knew about it. It is not critical. We are preparing the material.”¹⁸⁹ “We decide which stories to feature on the home page, but each individual section is their own responsibility” explains Juan Carlos. Echeverría adds, however, that “almost everybody accesses the site through the main page, except when they are told about specific content or they access it through Twitter or Google”.

It is midday when Borja realizes that José Bono, the president of the Spanish Parliament, is flying to Equatorial Guinea, a former Spanish colony in Africa.

“Do we have this story?” he asks.

“No”, Bernie replies.

“At all?”

“No, not at all”.

They call to liaise with the National news section. “We were told that it would be better to ignore it” replies an uncomfortable young journalist. She probably guesses that someone does not want that story to be written and had her answer been more explicit, could have meant a potential conflict. She leaves as soon as Borja comments that “we cannot ignore an official trip”. Borja goes to the national editor Casqueiro's table to consult with him, and eventually someone uploads a discreet story about Bono's trip.

By midday, journalists will start to arrive at the newsroom. They still arrive as they always have, “but section editors and deputy editors arrive much earlier now because the Net moves at a different pace,” explains Javier Casqueiro (48 years old), who has been National news editor for 21 years.¹⁹⁰ “From next April we expect to change everybody's working hours”. Iker Seisdedos, Culture editor, puts it in other terms: “we used to arrive by midday and leave before midnight. Now we have to arrive at half past eight in the morning but we are still leaving at midnight”¹⁹¹. It is not difficult to detect his poorly concealed discomfort.

Casqueiro shows me a group of very young journalists that are working beside him, all wearing headphones: “They are following the breakfasts”, a type of early-morning television program on which politicians and other traditional newsmakers are

¹⁸⁹ The final version of this story can be found here:

http://www.elpais.com/articulo/internacional/muertos/accidente/avion/aeropuerto/irlandes/Cork/elpepuint/20110210elpepuint_11/Tes [accessed March, 23th, 2011]

¹⁹⁰ Interview with author held on February 9th, 2011.

¹⁹¹ Interview with author, held on February 10th, 2011.

interviewed. “We listen to them and publish what they say online”. During the early morning, the day’s political agenda begins to be displayed on *El País*. ■

Although journalists here were not used to publishing online stories until recently, they already used the Net to search for stories and data. They generally accept that the Net constitutes a radical improvement, a place in which much information can be found, checked and interwoven. They do not seem to be especially affected or concerned by the reliability of online sources, or most probably as Doncel suggests, they know which ones they can rely on. They are aware that very important events still take place away from the Net and that it must only be seen as another tool, not a substitute to all previous ways of researching and contacting sources.

El País online, despite claiming to use only their own sources, relies heavily on news-wires, at least in the initial stages of a story, as most other news sites do. Not only this, they have also shown that they follow the agenda that is set every morning on radio and television programs, as does every other media outlet. Echeverría runs around the newsroom connected to news agencies and other online media and when something breaks the calm, they follow it, although it is true that they use their highly qualified staff as much as they can. Interestingly, it is often said that they do not depend on wires, contrary to the evidence collected at the newsroom.

It is also interesting that here and also at *El Mundo*, I have seen a tendency to avoid mentioning agencies as sources. The most they accept is being alerted by agencies, after which they take charge of the story themselves. Evidently, copying from others, although something institutionalised and done on a daily basis, does not produce cultural capital and collides with their traditional values. Originality is a cherished journalistic value that they collectively tend to protect, at least in their public narratives: they minimise their use of news agencies as much as they can, although the online world is based on permanently monitoring other news sites (Boczkowski, 2009 and 2010).

See behind the scenes the *habitus*: as it has been widely studied, original reporting is a long standing journalistic value ignored by those copying what news agencies publish (Keeble, 1994; Downie & Schudson, 2009, n.p.; Redden & Witschge, 2010, p. 184). Along all this research, I saw how journalists rush to explain why they *exceptionally* had to employ news-wires (“just for a few minutes”, “only because we have no correspondent there”) when evidence shows a larger usage. The online medium encourages copying from other media, due to its speed, but journalists, shaped with other values, look for ways to encircle the reality and manage a compromise between their values (*habitus*) and what is now a new journalistic rule.

As I was also told at *Diario de Mallorca*¹⁹², journalists cannot ignore public stories anymore. The journey of the Parliament's President to Africa is published because otherwise it will be reported by other media and it will be obvious that *El País* were unhappy with it. Then, I confirmed again that the traditional journalistic role as gatekeepers of the exclusive, to decide and select what is must be publicly known or kept hidden, is definitely gone. Reluctantly, they have to publish information about subjects that they otherwise would not like to do. Note that the reason to publish what otherwise they would not, is that they dislike being seen as manipulative, as having an interest, as not being reliable. What they would not have published about the journey to Africa is online because what they fear most is being perceived as manipulative. Who would be checking which story is missing? Mostly other media, colleagues in the field, who are permanently monitoring them. Vallés at *Diario de Mallorca* described it as “the imposed freedom”, against their will. But, somehow, they seem to be more comfortable by being more transparent. In the clash of two traditional values: being transparent and controlling the access to the public sphere, they seem to accept that the first is more important, although this option is imposed by the new technology. A really deep change that could be seen in very exceptional cases, but that they are soon accepting as part of their new environment. ■

ii. NEWS PRODUCTION AND AGGREGATION

Here is where the *El País'* newsroom is already experiencing the biggest effects of the Net. “Before the Internet era, we had to write our stories but there was not this sense of immediacy. We used to have a story, and then we looked for additional sources to check for more detail, after which we had to write it for the newspaper. Now, as soon as we see something of interest, we have to call the newsroom or even just write something immediately for the website. Then you have to update it, adding more data, different angles, different sides, and at the same time you have to think about how you will present it on the print edition. Before, we used to have a deadline, but now it is a permanent deadline”. Luis Doncel¹⁹³, reporter in the Finance and Business section, accepts that “until now we were talking about the Internet as the future, but now the future is here. We are living in that future”.

Which content, then, goes to the print edition and which to the online one? “We had,

¹⁹² Remember Matías Vallés (chapter IV) stating that they have to publish what they are told, because otherwise this story will be published as “the one that was censored by that medium”.

¹⁹³ Personal interview with the author, held on February, 10th, 2011.

and still have, this debate in the newsroom. For instance, when statistical information is released, and we find some aspect of its meaning that is buried, what should we do? Should we save it for the print edition? The dominant criterion in the newsroom is not to save any content for the next day. Now we are focusing on the web edition.” But Doncel leaves an open door to other situations when he says that “it must be decided case by case”.

Iker Seisdedos (32 years old) accepts that his area's case is different. “The web has been an important change for the Culture section and in this sense we are benefitting. For instance, an exhibition will be presented in a different form on the Net than it will be on the print edition. An exhibition on the Net consists of images; on the print edition, text. The Net, being without limits, offers us (the Culture section) wider options for publishing. We used to be constrained due to the lack of space; not anymore. Moreover, we work to a planned agenda in Culture, with very few unexpected events.” As the editor of this section, Seisdedos knows that the Net allows him to offer niche products, such as baroque music, jazz or different types of cinema. “We can now make better use of some of our colleagues who are very good addressing themes which have previously been aimed at too narrow a readership on the print edition”.

In Berna González Harbour's sections, opinion about the Net is similar: “Here, our team was frustrated because they were not able to publish all they wanted. Not so now. The science section, for instance, (consisting of two full time journalists), is now publishing online more than ever, and they can concentrate on some specific topics.”

It is midmorning when a journalist approaches the Internet table and says that the Andalusia's office has the story about the decision to close a restaurant whose owner did not ban smoking in its premises. “That is fantastic” says Bernie. “This story will open the edition. Good.”. Until then, the opening story was one from yesterday night: “Egypt's authorities have closed off access to Cairo, to avoid tomorrow's rally”. This is the main headline on the online edition and on every other print medium.

After a while, Bernie and Juan Carlos have got the story about the restaurant and have fitted the headline. “Try a shorter word”. Addressing me, he says, “we try to fit headlines for Firefox and Explorer, but we cannot be sure about every other browser”. Bernie says to Juan Carlos: “I have stories to relate to this one about the restaurant. I am sending them to you”. “Yeah”, replies Juan Carlos “I remember these pieces. One of

them was a good feature.” I ask them whether or not they can use contents that were already published. “We have to, not only are we allowed, we have to use them”.

Borja Echeverría comes to the Internet area constantly. He asks for details, who is doing what, where this or that story has been seen, whether or not we are preparing that coverage... “Are we informing people about the conflict between Sarkozy and the magistrates?” “Yes,” replies Bernie, who shares responsibilities with Juan Carlos. “It is here,” he says, while scrolling down the online front page. “Okay” says Borja, who tells me that “in 2002 the big battle was about speed, breaking-news. Today we still want to be the first, because we want to win every war, but we care much more about focus. Nowadays readers look for quality.” Bernie feels that today is a boring day. “A calm day is much worse than a stormy one, with a flood of stories. On a day like today we have to change stories to tell them in another way, but in the end there is no substance. But, when there is a flood of information, we enjoy it... as long as we do not get overwhelmed”.

Echeverría rules out that “we are trying to be like them [‘them’ is the online edition of *El Mundo*]. They are looking more and more for tabloid stories. They are not a tabloid medium, but they do not hesitate in using these stories. We want to be different, to show that we are not like them. Maybe we will have less readers, but our strategy is ours, it is more consistent. When you see their ‘most read stories’, there are always many stories about celebrities, sex or things like that”. Borja shows me a text on his smartphone sent yesterday evening by a former colleague who is still at *El Mundo*. It says “tomorrow I will smash the ratings with my story”. Borja asks Bernie to check his friend's story in *El Mundo* for me. There it is: “A conservative counsellor hires an “*Interviu* girl”¹⁹⁴ The leading one.” “Yesterday we published the Piqué and Shakira's picture.¹⁹⁵ We knew it would become the leading story. But we also had many stories about Egypt. I would be concerned if they [*El Mundo*] were overtaking us in offering quality, but when they offer this sort of sensational news, I am not concerned”.

At 13.00, Borja comes again. “I definitely do not like this web page. The story about

¹⁹⁴ *Interviu* is an Spanish magazine publishing very often pictures of naked girls. To see this story: <http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2011/02/09/madrid/1297283139.html> [accessed March, 23th, 2011]

¹⁹⁵ The Barcelona football player and the Colombian singer were, for weeks, said to be a couple and yesterday a picture of them together was published on his Facebook page, and was the most read story in most online media. Later the romance became public. This story is available at this address: http://www.elpais.com/articulo/agenda/Shakira/Pique/calculada/foto/cumpleanos/elpepigen/20110208/elpepiage_2/Tes [accessed March, 23th, 2011]

pollution is nothing. The other one about the smoking ban could go. We have to look for another thing. Gloria, I do like this story about the Pakistani child. What is it about?"

"You already know it. 37 deaths."

"How old was the child?"

"Eleven."

"Not fifteen?"

"I have read 11."

"I like it".

"But it is just what has been online for a long while."

"Yes, I know. But it is more a story than the one about pollution which, to be honest, is nothing. Bernie is looking for a good picture".

Casqueiro is working on the pro-independence Basque party's announcement that they will reject any kind of violence. He is working as though this was the most important story in months. "Tomorrow on the print paper we have to offer big scoops, features, and analysis.¹⁹⁶ We have to distil this information and a qualified expert shall analyse every detail over a full page. We have to use the best experts; to produce a coverage that nobody else can offer. There will be four pages about this. With this offer we intend to satisfy those readers who want to understand what is happening in a deep way. But we will also feature analysis on the Net. But if you are looking for something better, to read calmly at home, with every angle and point of view explored, then the paper is for you".



Journalists at the *El País* newsroom are discovering the particularities of the new technology, for instance, how useful it could be for Culture, Science or even Sports, to offer a detailed display of information for niches of readers. With the paper they could not do that, but online there are no space restrictions, so everything can be published and more readers can have access to it. Niche markets are said to be winning; also niche specialists may deliver their expertise. Seisdedos, the Culture editor, has soon got used to the new language of the Net, when he is writing about music, cinema, exhibitions or art. On paper they used to write, online they tend to offer images or sounds, because space is limitless. Those are the very basic and most obvious differences between producing an online medium and a print newspaper. I will come back to these new rules that regulate the production of news.

¹⁹⁶ Casqueiro employed the English word.

No one knows for sure in *El País* what should be written for the online edition and what for the print one. Nor the policy is clear. On the one hand, they say that their policy is to put everything on the Net, but on the other, they also defend the fact they must offer the best quality product in the traditional print paper. Berna González reckons that once the best possible online version has been produced, they need some additional creativity to continue to offer a better print newspaper. This is a risky request.

When the policy is to frequently adapt content, then you have to learn the English neologism “churnalism”, that is used for the sort of journalism that consists of presenting non original content from additional angles, pretending that it is something new. In Spanish a term that is usually employed is “centrifugadora¹⁹⁷”: the same things reported in different order to pretend they are new or different. “The story about the Pakistani child has been online for hours” a reporter tells Borja Echeverría. He accepts it, but he orders them to look for another picture and present the story again from another point of view. Fernando Gualdoni (an editor at the International news section) is highly critical of this shaking up of stories to present them in another light but adding little new information. They tend to believe that readers need to find something different in news reports, and readers seem to accept watching the same story told in a new way, from a different angle. There is nothing here that is consistent with the traditional journalistic principle that the same story must not be told twice (Singer, 2003, p. 149; see Journalistic values in Section 1i, in Chapter II), but it seems that immediacy (presenting something new on the front page) is a more important online value.

There are many studies about the visual impact of websites on audiences, and about the different nature of this relationship (See Thurman and Myllylahti, 2009, p. 704, about the average time that readers spend online in relation to a print newspaper).

Gualdoni also posits that online media should not use the “centrifugadora” just to offer a new front page every few minutes. For him, news should not be changed online unless something new happens. At the same time, he claims that newspapers should educate the public and not only offer things to consume. This is a conflict that also affects the ideological aspect of the newspaper, but here there is another player: business. *El País* needs to become the news leader again and some types of content mean more readers. Cultural capital seems tied back to economic capital. See how Echeverría accepts that they published the Shakira and Piqué’s picture as most other media outlets did, despite it being rather a tabloid story. And also it is worth to see how Echeverría is constantly referring their work to their main competitor’s performance: an example of what Bourdieu calls a “game of mirrors” (1998/1996, p. 24), journalists controlling and, at the

¹⁹⁷ It is the Spanish name for spin-dryer. The meaning is that inside it things are the same, but they change order and positions as a result of the speed of rotation.

same time, being controlled by their field. What Bourdieu described about the print press – “if *Liberation* gives headlines to a given event, *Le Monde* can't remain indifferent, although, given its particular prestige, it has the option of standing a bit apart in order to mark its distance” (Bourdieu, 1998/1996, p. 24) –, but much faster, even in real time, in the online environment. Except for the speed, is there any difference between what I saw at *El País* –and what I will describe at *El Mundo*¹⁹⁸– and Bourdieu's analysis from the print newsroom?

Editorial staff spend a good deal of time talking about other newspapers, particularly about “what they did and we didn't do” (“we really blew that one”) and what should have been done”. (1998/1996, p. 24)

The usage of hyperlinks in *El País* is minimal. At the main table they do not stress this tool and when they do, it is to link with information already at their webpage, always of their own. ■

iii. DISTRIBUTION OF CONTENTS

This is Luis Doncel: “what has really changed is the fact that sources react immediately. I remember that a few days ago [January 11th, 2011] the President of the Government [Rodríguez Zapatero] presented a report about the Spanish economy, and I wrote the headline on the web with an angle that was not exactly what the Government apparently wanted. Moncloa's Economy Office manager called us immediately asking that this headline be removed¹⁹⁹. Before, this phone call would have taken place when thousands of print papers had already been sold, and you would have been unable to stop the distribution of the story. Now, they know that you can change everything if you want. So, pressure is faster and stronger”. The immediate distribution of news, in this case, means that sources, especially powerful ones, are much more aware of what is being said about them. Berna González reckons that now, when something is published, sources call immediately. “For us journalists, the Internet is awful but for our sources is absolute hell because they have to check what is being said about them, on a minute by minute basis. But, on the other hand, their influence is bigger because changes can be easily introduced.” Berna gives importance not only to what *El País* publishes but “they [sources] are concerned about our influence on other media. Our headlines give the lead

¹⁹⁸ At *El Mundo* (see Chapter VII), I found that they were of course following other media, especially *El País*, their main competitor.

¹⁹⁹ The Presidency of the Government is based at a palace in Madrid named Moncloa.

to other media in one sense, and they know that we will be followed by other media around Spain. But they still are much more worried about the effects of the print edition.”

Javier Casqueiro also detects that speed generates new challenges, although he does not mention the same problems as Berna. “Speed increases risks”, accepts Casqueiro, who, as he speaks with me, is looking at his screen and from time to time typing. “Sometimes on the online site we have no time to decide how to focus some events and later the print and online editions are out of alignment. Nonetheless, what we say online is highly influential and is followed by other media. We see it. Our priorities, our criteria, are reproduced by other media, but we want to shape the Spanish public agenda. And we also want to do it online.” He is talking about the need to decide a focus, an angle, a framework. Speed seems to be contrary to this need for reflection.

Speed has further consequences. One of them has been seen by Luis Doncel. “The new dynamics now mean that you have to write about everything you are told. If you don’t, you risk other media informing people about it. The whole idea of a scoop is being diluted now. The best scoop will be reproduced in a few seconds by many media”. So, readers are no able to distinguish which one the original was. Despite this, Echeverría says that “now it is not a matter of immediacy but of quality,” something that does not exactly match this. ■

Journalists at *El País* are getting more familiar with the Net as they use it. They have been publishing on it for less than a year, but some of them have already seen what the new way of distributing news means for powerful sources: they now try to influence the media more intensely because they can now get better results, as long as changing the information is easy and cheap, and they can stop it at the very early stages of distribution. So, sources, especially those that are professionalised, institutionalised and powerful, have adopted new practices and, as a result, they are increasing their influence and pressure on media, especially on media that are references for other media—as already seen by Phillips (2010a). In this case, my findings go further: how immediacy gives sources a tool to exercise instant influence over newsrooms, and how efficient this is. Berna González’s assessment that “for us the Internet is awful but for our sources it is absolute hell” refers to the fact that they have to control web pages by the minute. It shows that, culturally, journalists with so much experience in print media need time to be comfortable with the online environment and that they have to learn the new rules as

soon as possible, because sources are rushing to profit from any loophole. *El País* is itself powerful, but its headlines will be reproduced in much of the media and even those who do not reproduce them will feel their influence. So, the Internet's immediacy is developing some forms of behaviour on the side of sources, which are potentially dangerous for the media and their independence.

Significant to the journalistic culture is the fact that scoops can be self-diluting. Doncel explains that publishing a scoop means that in minutes it will be running around the Net. On the other hand, scoops published by other media can be reproduced in a very short period of time so, their value is shortening. What I had seen at *Efe* I again detected at *El País*, and it will emerge again at *El Mundo*. Also, then, what was previously seen as a "game of mirrors" (Bourdieu, 1998/1996, p.24) now is radically more influential because due to the immediacy associated to the Net, it shapes stories around the world in minutes, relegating other interpretations to more marginal media. ■

3. PROFESSIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL MATTERS

"This weekend, at home, I prepared a report for my bosses about how to organise the online newspaper. We are now preparing a deep internal change, so I spent most of the week-end doing this report." Javier Casqueiro, a key player at the newsroom, the main National news editor, perhaps the third most powerful journalist in the newsroom, explains to me that no problems with the new roles have emerged from adding the online to the print edition. "Well, it is easy and I do not see any problems. This morning before eight, still at home, while I was having breakfast, I was in contact with readers through the Eskup about this Basque story. And yesterday, late in the night, when I left, I prepared today's video blog."

For Casqueiro, a father of four, the only reason for some journalists to feel some discomfort with the new functions could be that they do not have enough time to do all they want. I ask him about the conflicts that are generally seen in newsrooms around the world. "We have a very experienced team in our section. I do not perceive that this routine could be problematic. For instance: yesterday it was a very important day [it was when Sortu made public their political plans, announced that they reject violence and said that they would register to be candidates at the next polls]. One of our best experts in the Basque Country, Luis Aizpeolea, with very good contacts in Moncloa [the Prime Minister's office], went there for the press conference. Before leaving in the morning he

had prepared the video blog. Then, after the press conference in Bilbao's city centre, he left for the airport where he sent an analysis of the situation for the web.²⁰⁰ Later, when he arrived back in Madrid [a flight from Bilbao to Madrid takes about 60 minutes], he could write his information for the print edition. I sincerely do not believe that Luis had any problems yesterday. It was easy, good for him and good for the newspaper. And it is not complex.” Would you say that the economic situation at the newspaper, could influence how journalists feel? I ask Casqueiro. “People are perfectly conscious about the present economic environment. This helps us to realize how fortunate we are, being at an excellent newspaper where we are just asked to do a little bit more”.

Salaries at *El País* were traditionally the highest among Spanish media, but now, “they have proposed that new entrants would be paid 800 euros per month”, explains a journalist in the newsroom.²⁰¹ “Things will change quite a lot here”. So, it is feared that *El País'* staff will suffer not only because they are demanded to work more, but because they are risking more than just their personal time. Everything is happening at the same time, late and fast.

Fernando Gualdoni (42 years old), the International news editor, is definitely in favour of creating audiovisual content. “We are now basically producing a written newspaper online. But we should use more audiovisual content. I fully agree. We could offer a video blog, giving a personal analysis about the story. [...] We do not have a magical solution. We are testing the best way to do it. We have to understand the market's preferences. We have to remember that South America is our market and that for them we need to adapt our approach, our language. We also intend to produce a multimedia newspaper, but our capacity is limited. We are exploring different lines but many of them will fail. We also have the Eskup tool. For me it is just a tool, just that, a tool”. Gualdoni's compares *El País'* changes to a Turkish coffee. “Now we are waiting for the sediment to settle”. On the one hand the staff need time for the sediment of these new practices to settle but, on the other, the company is rushing to prepare for when the wave comes. So, a conflict is looming.

Borja Echeverría is entering and leaving an office in which a meeting is in progress.

²⁰⁰ This analysis, available here:

http://www.elpais.com/articulo/espana/Sortu/propugna/rechazo/ambages/violencia/ETA/elpepuesp/20110209elpepunac_34/Tes [accessed March, 24th, 2011]

²⁰¹ Full salary for a junior full-time reporter, roughly a quarter of today's wages, and slightly more than the legal Spanish minimum wage.

“Since two weeks ago, the first daily meeting, that used to be at 11, begins at 9. We needed to change it because our peak is at 9.30 and we need to plan the day earlier”. For Gualdoni, this change, and the fact that the centre of the newsroom is now occupied by the web team, “is highly symbolic”.

Later than midday, Guillermo Altares arrives. He is the man who sits between Borja, Juan Carlos and Bernie. He is lecturing in Journalism at a university in Madrid. He sits and answers a telephone call from Pilar Bonet, the newspaper's correspondent in Moscow. Altares talks while switching on his computer, opening his email account, and checking what is new in his inbox folder. As Altares opens the online *BBC* site (“Schoolboy bomber kills 31 in Pakistan”), he explains to Pilar Bonet what an online soft story is, how it attracts readers and what *El Mundo* and *El País*'s online policies are. It seems like a lecture: “some media websites charge you to see their pages. It is very frustrating when you are not allowed to read what you have seen in a headline.” He explains the pay-wall that the *New York Times* was planning to introduce in the near future, but “they will allow you access when coming from a social network.”²⁰² I do not know how they will solve this link”. After almost an hour on the phone with Moscow, Altares leaves the newsroom to take a break. Bonet seemed to be a typical reporter, anxious to understand how this new world works. There are more than 300 journalists at *El País*, and it is just thirteen months since they were first exposed to these new dynamics.

Casqueiro, who is enthusiastic about this wave of changes, accepts that multitasking brings up a number of conflicting issues. “I spent a couple of years working on *CNN*+²⁰³ and I have learnt the language of television. I understand that those who are not used to this medium could fear it.” Despite his assurances that everybody accepts and takes up the Net as part of their daily lives, people approaching the central area of the newsroom are mostly very young, and, except for the liaison reporters, most of the sections are not visibly involved in web activities. They arrive, sit at their tables, make telephone calls, talk with their editors and leave as they have been doing for years.

Gumersindo Lafuente, himself a journalist, has his own interpretation of what is happening with journalism and the Net, about where all of the pieces fit: “when

²⁰² Since March, 2011, the *New York Times* allows a limited surf on its website and asks for a subscription from some point onwards.

²⁰³ A joint Spanish subsidiary of *El País* and *CNN*, closed down in December 2010.

someone on Twitter has a number of followers, because what he says is interesting to others, he is a prescriber, someone who is valued for his opinions, comments and suggestions. When a detective novels writer gets a number of followers and his opinions are valued, and when publishers realise that this writer is influential, when his opinions can increase or decrease novels sales, then this person becomes a prescriber. Are they journalists? Be they journalists or not, they are prescribers. This is what journalists were in this newspaper, but they used to work in a quasi-monopolistic environment. When someone was good enough, then they could come to a newspaper like this one, but once here, they were shielded against criticism, against their readers. Readers could not interact with journalists. Media sites were giving their imagined readers what they wanted, but without accepting any criticism, without social control. This is why journalists nowadays need to claim their role, as mediators. The media had become institutionalised, another political or business power, and they were more controlled and politically correct.” ■

Journalists at *El País* are at a really critical crossroads: on the one hand, they have to be consistent with their professional beliefs (their collective *habitus*, how they see their profession, what they value as good journalism, something especially important being the Spanish professional reference) and, following them, shape the online site accordingly. On the other, they risk losing their jobs due to the company financial crisis, so they tend to accept whatever model is proposed by managers, despite their instincts. For instance: the devotion of time that Casqueiro seems to defend is not realistic; editors should not be arriving to the newsroom every day at 8.30 in the morning and leaving just before midnight, reporters are not prepared to write valuable articles while in a taxi to an airport. Not everybody has the ability to manage a video-blog as is now demanded at the newsroom. It took me days to see that not everybody agrees with managers, but in the end I learned that some journalists do not yet feel ready to produce multimedia features or that their technological resources are inadequate. Seisdedos says that they do not use the cameras they have got, but just ask for multimedia content from sources. These situations are both clearly distressing, especially for those, who until few months ago, were absolutely out of touch with the Net and were considered part of the most privileged group of Spanish journalists. At *Efe*, as we have seen, lower demands from the managers led to a previously unseen conflict, something that at *El País* are not on the cards.

Multimedia is not rejected by most journalists I talked with, but they do demand better

resources, more training. Gualdoni thinks that it could work well, accepting that it fits in with his ideas about journalism (his field's values, in fact). Seisdedos reckons that an exhibition can be seen from another point of view online, accepting that it can enhance information. But most of the journalists have not yet fully accepted the multimedia dynamic. They are still working old shifts, designed for the print edition. Just a few journalists, most of them very young, are acquainted with the Net, while the vast majority of staff work as always, thinking mainly in patterns established for the print edition. ■

4. THE AUDIENCE AND ITS INTERACTIONS

Who fixes *El País'* policy, the newsroom or its readers? “When *El País* began charging for accessing its website, in 2002, we at *El Mundo* decided to minimize the ideological content on our website”, remembers Gumersindo Lafuente, who then was the manager of the leading Spanish journalistic website. Their intention was crystal clear: to catch *El País'* readers. For Borja Echevarría, “the Internet has to be moderate, not ideological, at least for us, but ours is a moderate newspaper”.

Not everybody thinks that *El País* online should be less ideological than the print edition. Fernando Gualdoni says “that we are in a very confusing situation. Sometimes we say that we have to produce what readers want and sometimes we decide that we will choose. This, in the end, is what we should have as a model. In the case of our main rival, *El Mundo*, there are huge differences between the print and the web editions. The Net edition is almost neutral although the print edition has a clear political line. Here we want readers to identify us on the Net as well as in print; as if what has changed is just the format but not content. Nevertheless, I would not say that we have found the magical solution”. Gualdoni sees the *El Mundo's* formula as a way of offering the types of stories that can be changed many times “because they do not need an interpretation, a framework. It is just what has happened; they do not need research. But here we think that *El País* is *El País* wherever you are, and wherever you access our paper. We are always serious, deep, and interpretative. We are not a popular newspaper”. He implies that this work requires time and does not work well with immediacy. Gualdoni defends the idea that a serious medium would have a market. “I have seen some complex and serious analysis here that have had a good response from readers; stories about youth unemployment, the real estate crisis and others. But, one thing is my vision and the

other is what will really happen in the future. Of course, I would like to be the *New York Times* in Spanish. I hope that someone realises that we could be the great Spanish speaking newspaper.” The same *New York Times* that Lafuente thinks has a heavy structure in comparison with *The Huffington Post*.

Gualdoni is not just thinking in terms of Spain. For him, there is a place for an important newspaper in this language, with the Spanish speaking world as its readership. “I used to work in London for the Latin America Newsletters (*LatinNews*) and lately for the *BBC* in Spanish. The *BBC* was the reference point then for Latin America in English. When someone in America needed an independent vision about them, they looked to the *BBC*. My idea is that *El País* should be the reference for this area. I would like to be the site on which Latin Americans joined to understand what is happening around the world and especially in our area.”

Gualdoni remembers that “this newspaper was born with the idea of explaining what is behind the news. I still think that we should have this goal, and we need background, patience and a clear commitment. If some media outlets are doing it, why not us?” For Gualdoni, the role of this newspaper should be to change readers' habits, not only follow them. “Many journalists here think that we should train our readers onto a better way of accessing our website.” Gualdoni believes that his role as a journalist is “to enforce the debate. There is a distance between what people are concerned about and what we are publishing. But I do believe that what I am saying is important, is relevant. When I write about politics it is because I am firmly convinced that it is something that must be known. Here I perceive a certain distance between what journalists say and the public”.

Javier Casqueiro, the National news editor says: “we have a brand, a name. We want the Net to be related to our brand, to what *El País* means, synergic and aligned. We are implementing all these policies in order to show our readers that we are synergic, even in the ideological side. This morning, when one of our reporters finished an interview with Etxeberria²⁰⁴ we agreed the headlines with our team. This sort of agreement has different levels, but in this case what is at stake is relevancy”. So, tomorrow, in the print edition, the point of view given for this particular story will be in the same vein as today's piece on the website.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁴ The leader of Sortu, the new political Basque party.

²⁰⁵ Later, at 19.00, I checked and the information about Sortu was number 11 in the list of most seen stories on the *El País* website. In *El Mundo* the story appears with a less ideological framework, in number 7 of their most seen issues.

“Now we know what readers are looking for”, says Seisdedos. “We know what a 'pincha pincha' [click click] story is, the one that generates a lot of interest and is always light, like on a tabloid paper. But there are other content that works very well, for instance all news related to ancient Egypt. Mysteries from old ages are very popular indeed, but I am aware that some other stories that we produce will not be followed. Let's say an interview with Sánchez Ferlosio [a remarkable Spanish novelist and essayist]. We know that it will not be a popular story, but it is important and it must be reported. Maybe it is worth diverting some of the popular content for the Net and leaving the best stories for the paper.” Despite being one of the youngest editors, Seisdedos does not connect with everything related to Net, for instance, Twitter. “I do not like this kind of communication. 140 characters is not communication.”

Are journalists at *El País* concerned with interactivity with readers? It does not seem to be what concerns most journalists there now. They do not care much about what readers say or comment on in their small and isolated corner. No one talks about or reads what audiences have to say. Gualdoni gives me his opinion: “interactivity is related with general education. Here in Spain the levels are much lower than before. It has been identified on the Pisa Report²⁰⁶ and it is part of the problem. And I would also link it to the sort of TV and radio debate programs, where most of the participants feel that they can talk about the last Sunday's goal as well as about atomic policies. This is a very poor public debate”. ■

Journalists at *El País* ask what the company's attitude to the Net must be: will they impose what they believe to be relevant or accept what works well and follow demand? They claim that their brand should not be associated with popular content, but they sometimes find shortcuts to justify what rewards them with more readers. From how they present their internal debates, it is clear that they are still defining their future online identity: will *El País* online be the product of what they want or will it be what readers want? This debate is not only about political leanings, but also about the whole product: Echeverría says that he wants a quality product, competing in terms of information, not sensationalism. But is it possible to be the leader, as they desperately need to be, and at the same time preserve a quality product?

Gualdoni and Casqueiro posit the idea that the newspaper should shape readers around its news site. They would prefer readers adapting to their product. In this case, their

²⁰⁶ An annual report on education produced by the OECD.

online brand would be very similar to the print one, but would a more conservative presentation attract the number of users they desperately need? It seems that the problem about what kind of online news they produce is an old and already debated question. Every medium has to choose their public, their editorial lines and their style. But media companies which used to produce print newspapers suddenly have to offer a product to a public ten times bigger, more plural, wider, reaching more social levels, countries and cultures.²⁰⁷ Does the print model apply to online readers? Some studies in Spain found that many newspaper buyers said that for them, reading certain newspapers was a social symbol, something that the environment somehow demand from them or they use as a tool to represent an identity (Machin, 2002, pp. 141-155). How do these behaviours relate to the Net, where the link is more personal?

Gualdoni's ideas open the door to new markets. Latin America could give *El País* a boost in their number of readers, but attacking this market would take time that they lack. And, he adds, they should be adapting stories for more than one country and its social reality. Gualdoni, again, reminds me that he has seen some complex stories, well presented, that have got huge amounts of readers online, making him confident that an online medium, with deep analysis, could be viable.

Most of this debate has to do with what is journalism: is it what the traditional vision says, that those who decide are journalists or is it what audiences demand, as a result of some sort of dialogue, where journalists are just one part? Despite the fact that Lafuente defends arriving at the final stages of the present transition or journey (as described by Lewis, 2012), where audiences may engage with journalists, many other colleagues, reporters as well as editors, prefer their traditional role: imposing their content on audiences. Gualdoni summarises this still living journalistic vision: "I do believe that what I am saying is important, is relevant. When I write about politics it is because I am firmly convinced that it is something that must be known about", so, they are still away from what Anderson described as a journalism addressed to what he calls "algorithmical" audiences, determined by the Net (Anderson, 2011a and 2011b); their 'agenda setting' function is still key for them. ■

5. CONCLUSION

For years, *El País* was the professional reference in the journalistic field in Spain. Its members were very influential. Politicians, bankers, entrepreneurs and intellectuals struggled to be on its pages. Students of journalism dreamed of being a member of its

²⁰⁷ The *El País* newsroom, which used to produce and publish a newspaper selling 350,000 copies, has now to reach 20 million monthly only users in more countries, provinces and social levels.

staff. A situation similar to that that Bourdieu describes in relation to *Le Monde* in France: a medium feared by politicians, that shapes the agenda and tends to affect other fields (Bourdieu, 1998/1996, pp. 23-25). “A generation of Spaniards has grown up with *El País* as a journalistic reference, politically and vitally essential” (Varela, 2004, p. 40). Aurora Labio, analysing its power in Spain, says that “media, the press, [is] not the fourth estate, but part of the first power, tightly interlinked with it, in economic and political matters” (Labio, 2001, p. 87.) Its newsroom was the place where, for years, many journalists were generating cultural capital.

But, in a fast succession of events since 2008, *El País* began reporting first the loss of readers, then the loss of advertising, then the sale of its television stations followed by the whole company, cost cuttings and by 2009 a group of youngsters ascending to the newsroom, seated in the middle, reorganising shifts, making senior reporters begin much earlier, and giving orders to that experienced and prestigious team. Now, in just a year, they are asked to produce content for the online edition and they are told that the Net is the important area. They knew the Internet as mere users, to collect data, to check sources, but they did not know how to produce information, what the language is. Nor the concealed tricks. Their shock is the biggest I have seen during my research: the most demanding task for the least (electronically) prepared team. In the same way that Seisdedos learnt that there are many more opportunities online for information about classical music or ballet, because they have specialists and the required space, they have to learn how the relationship with sources will fit (they are already realising it), how they should protect themselves from agents that want to influence the agenda, what platform they should employ to offer each type of news, how to balance speed and quality, how to treat their wide range of readers, and so on.

The most influential journalists in Spain are now learning basic lessons about a new language that is 13 years old in their company. On the top of that, they have their *habitus*, their traditional way of solving and managing professional conflicts, their understanding of their environment, something that has been shaped for decades in print culture, that will not change easily and that will cause more conflict. The threat of redundancies is in the air, a factor that Bourdieu or his disciples did not value when presenting their theory of practice, but that works making changes smoother. In the same way that Berna González Harbour replies when I ask her what her area is and she

still says “the pages in the middle”, time and the print culture will act as a brake to the change that is being developed in the most powerful newsroom in Spain.

With an old *habitus* embedded in them, this team is confronted with a new reality, with new unknown rules, a new media ecology. They are now realising how much faster sources can be accessed, learning how readers behave and, at the same time, they are in a rush to build an online identity that should be the successor of their print one, but also viable. Is the approach of the print version (with less than a half a million copies) viable online (which reaches millions)? As with the Turkish coffee, they need time “for the sediment to settle”; something they definitely lack. They debate whether they may shape their readership or follow its demands, whether they may be the Spanish *New York Times* or something less ambitious. While the editor-in-chief does not see the sense in a heavy structure, most journalists still think in print terms, as they are used to doing. In this case, the economic crisis acts as an accelerator: what would not have been accepted in other situations is now pushing in favour of changes, of the adaptation to the new medium. This is a clash of an old and solid *habitus* with a new world, almost without a transition period.

Chapter VII

El Mundo

Exploring new journalism with the “trial and error” formula

“We produce multimedia features [...]. We employ all our resources, technicians, designers, journalists, correspondents. [...] What we do first is to design a plan, with a list of themes, and then for each of them we create videos, graphics, sound, and even games. Some of our products were sold with the newspaper as CD's. But they are on the Net, to be seen. When they are on the homepage, it is astonishing how well they work. The one about the Beatles arrived to the level of the best seen stories. A success. We are very proud. Of course, we believe that dense content is possible online, as far as you adapt the presentation to the Net, to its language.”

Sonia Aparicio²⁰⁸.

²⁰⁸ Interview with the author, February the 2nd, 2011.

1. THE CONTEXT OF ON-LINE NEWS PRODUCTION

Looking at the large newsroom where more than 200 journalists produce *El Mundo*, the second biggest Spanish print newspaper, and the first online one, I ask Fernando Baeta where his team is. Everybody is on his team, he says, because *El Mundo's* philosophy is that everybody works for both editions. But reality still lags behind the theory. So, I nuance my question and ask Baeta about the people that are primarily in charge of the

Who is who

Fernando Baeta. Editor-in-chief *elmundo.es*
Fernando Mas. Deputy editor-in-chief.
 Coordination.
José Luis Martín. Editor. breaking-news.
Olalla Novoa. Editor. breaking-news.
Yaiza Perera. Editor. breaking-news.
Sonia Aparicio. Editor. Features.
Sergio Rodríguez. Social networks.

online edition.²⁰⁹ They can be divided into two areas: breaking-news, occupying six tables in the middle of the newsroom, working 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and, nearer to his office, a smaller team, producing features for the online edition. There are thirty people in

Spain and thirteen more in Miami.

El Mundo moved to this new building in the Northeast of Madrid just three years ago. The newsroom was intentionally designed to mix both teams, in what should be a full integration of synergies and efforts. “We offer two different products: the online and the print editions, with two different approaches. And, in the middle, *Orbyt*, the print edition that is available online”. The *elmundo.es* is free, focusing on two main areas: breaking-news, its principal offering, and features and other related content. “Since last March, no information from the print edition can be seen on the online edition”, explains Baeta. Since then, apart from at newsstands, the print edition is available only at *Orbyt*, an application for mobile phones, tablets and computers, by paying 180 euros a year.²¹⁰

Fernando Baeta (Zaragoza, 1954; all of his professional life in *El Mundo*) was appointed editor-in-chief of the online edition when Gumersindo Lafuente (now at *El País*) left the company at the end of 2007. “By that time our site was already a success. I had to retain it as a leader. *El País* is still paying for the mistake in 2002 of charging users for access.” *El Mundo's* online edition is profitable. “In 2010 our gross revenue was more than 22 million euros, not enough to compensate for the print edition losses, but we are

²⁰⁹ Personal interviews with the author, held on January, 24th and 26th, 2011.

²¹⁰ In March 2011 *El Mundo* offered this service with a 50 per cent discount. They said then that they have about 20.000 subscriptions.

leaders in the Spanish language, something very important for us.”²¹¹ Baeta seems to have a clear idea about the model: “We do not offer any content from the print edition. The paper is dying and we will not help in its killing. By the way, I do not understand *El País*’ policy, of giving their entire print edition online for free. Our online product is simple: on the one hand, breaking-news and, on the other, something that I call ‘the amusement park’, a mix of different things: football, videos, chats, features and graphics. They are a success, connecting very well with readers and are intended to fill off-peak moments, when the hard news stories are not coming. And America. We are surprised about the good results in America. Despite our lack of promotion, we are the non-national online leading medium in every country, excepted United States and Uruguay. We have a newsroom in Miami, where they complement us.”

Fernando Mas (44, Uruguay; at *El Mundo* for his entire professional life) is the online deputy editor-in-chief. He is mostly involved in analysing patterns of readers’ behaviour, issues of access, and the enormous flow of data that can be obtained from the Net.²¹² “On weekdays we have 1.9 million users, 1.3 or 1.4 million on weekends. We now have 10 per cent more users than a year ago, despite not offering content from the print edition.”²¹³ Our main rival, *El País*, offers it for free and they are approaching us. But we are still leaders.” On an ordinary January 2011 day, 80 per cent of users were from Spain, 3 per cent from Mexico, 2.2 from US, 1.7 the from United Kingdom and 1.4 from Argentina.

“Here, online, people look for what they want. In print, they accept what is on offer. So, we have to be plural. In Spain, the print press has been very dogmatic, full of ideology. The Internet is different to all that. We are different from the paper in this sense. We offer journalism, stories that have been selected, evaluated and presented within a certain order. This is our job, being journalists, it is what we know”, explains Mas. Nevertheless, in his opinion “all online media are doing things with the same procedure: trial and error. We do not know how our decisions will be received, how our products will work. For instance, we created an evening newspaper on *pdf* that failed. We are always working in this line: trial and error.”

²¹¹ RCS, the Italian owner of *El Mundo* do not publish detailed financial information about its Spanish businesses.

²¹² Personal interview on January, 24th, 2011.

²¹³ Its official figures are 32.6 million monthly users in March; 27.0 million in February and 26.8 in January, 2011 (OJD, 2011).

For Baeta, “an important reason for our success is being less political, less ideological than the print paper. We offer facts in a simple language to be informative about events. If you want to have a broader idea about what these facts mean, from an ideological perspective, read the print paper.” Mas has detected that many people read *El Mundo* online and *El País*' print edition. “15 per cent of our users buy *El País*' newspaper”.

What is *El Mundo*'s attitude towards multimedia? “It is a mistake not to offer enough multimedia content. For commercial reasons, I have to offer it because it sells very well. Advertisers demand video.”²¹⁴ Today, for instance, we are offering Aguirre's words in favour of Cascos through video; and yesterday's football matches were mostly video.²¹⁵ We tend to offer a lot of videos.” For Baeta “the big publicity venture online has not yet been developed. Advertisers are learning. In the beginning, the big distributors of ads used to dedicate some money to experimenting online, but not any more. Now big brands use the Net as the centre of their campaigns and the paper, radio or even television as complements. A few days ago we accepted a proposal to apply a background colour to our whole webpage for a telecoms company, and we accepted. We are not going to accept this very often, but why not once a month?”

Sergio Rodríguez, the youngest journalist on the staff of the digital edition at *El Mundo*, is in charge of planning strategies relating to new applications and online functionalities, such as social networks. “As a journalist, I do not expect much help from the social networks. It's just a fad. I believe that journalism will survive just by doing more journalism, more news. Multimedia features work very well. Graphics are well received. Analyses also are a success. *The Guardian* is exploring this way forward”. He also has an idea about how their future business may well work: “we are now again developing a project to create our own social network. We had begun in 2007, but then we abandoned it. Now we have made some corrections and are again working on it. We will ask readers for their personal information to know them better in order to later commercialise this database. Nowadays, Facebook is doing this for their own use. We also want to know these details and then we can develop our own strategies.” Rodríguez says that *El Mundo* do not want to be an early adopter but neither do they want to be too

²¹⁴ When asked, Baeta seems to confuse multimedia with video. And in fact, he just talks about video. But in what he calls the “amusement park” there are a lot of products on Flash, interactive graphics, that are relevant and that were introduced by this medium in Spain (Díaz Noci, 2005, p. 27).

²¹⁵ An internal confrontation amongst two conservative sectors within the incumbent Spanish political party, the Popular Party.

late. So they are now looking at how Twitter and applications like this are adopted by users. "There have been many innovations that came and faded very quickly. It is good to wait and see".

Is there a future for traditional media? Sergio Rodríguez has no definite idea: "We have to explore more business models. Perhaps social networks could allow personalised ads, maybe we could charge a euro per month to avoid ads (they can become very intrusive indeed) or perhaps a combination of different models. Let's see how the *New York Times* model works. They are going to charge you to continue after you have viewed part of their website..." ■

From the business point of view, the *El Mundo* website is an example of the contradictions of today's journalism: it is a leader in Spanish, it is profitable, but it is not able to cope with the print edition losses. They have developed their own strategy but if *El País* had not taken the bold step of charging for access to its online site in 2002, who knows where *El Mundo* would be today.

As a result of this, they discovered that to reach huge amounts of readers, they had to stick to facts and avoid being as ideological as on the print counterpart. This discovery was made by chance, only because the competitor was gone and they tried to seduce its readers. Now they see that being less political is profitable. They have found that many readers in Spanish speaking America follow them. Could they have more than 30 million monthly users whilst being ideological? I have already mentioned the implications that buying a print newspaper had in Valencia (Machin, 2002, p. 141) (It was seen as a social commitment, a symbol of status). Does accessing online media, a very personal and private decision, work in the same way? In Spain "the same story can be very different depending on where you read it", says Baeta. Anyway, they always have in mind the fact that 15 per cent of their online readers also read the print *El País*, a more left leaning medium. How does a reduced ideological content fit with journalistic values that have been, and still are, the core of print journalism? This success may well justify an exception. Definitely, buying a print paper and accessing an online journalistic site apply different rules, being the second more private, less symbolic.

El Mundo's attitude towards technology is a cautious one: some innovations come and go. They do not want to be early adopters. At the moment of this study, they were analysing whether or not to develop their own social network, mostly for business reasons: knowing the tastes and preferences of their readers would permit advertisements 'a la carte'. However they will not be the first in taking this step. 'Wait and see' is a rule that has

worked well many times in the past and will again be applied.

They have studied quite well how readers behave. For years, breaking-news has been their main product, what grips more users. It is fast and simple and immediately available. Because there is not always something new and exciting however, online features can reach the same high readership levels. So, they are offering a lot of chat, complex multimedia products, interviews, features to fulfill the valley times. They are going further in this path (always by trial and error) to offer more products to parts of their readership, showing that there is a place for good (non-traditional) journalism on the Net. They feel rewarded by readers with products that fit well with their ideology of what online journalism should be. They seem to be convinced that what can give them more readers is better journalism. They have tried some journalistic formulas that worked, so they do not introduce more technology, but more journalism, content, genres. They did have not yet fully introduced a Twitter application, although they are already using it in some cases, because they understand that some of these techniques in the end fail, or could fail.

Interestingly, they do not conceal the fact that what is most important about multimedia is that it catches advertisements. The seconds that users have to wait to watch a video are gold for advertisers and, as a result, for *El Mundo*. Readers, who tend to avoid ads, are not able to avoid watching them before an interesting online video. Also, in this sense, they say that advertisers are still getting familiar with the Net. “The big publicity online has not yet been developed”, they say. Why? Again, it is a medium that is still underexplored. ■

2. THE JOURNALISTIC PROCESS.

i. INFORMATION GATHERING

“The team that began the online paper was under the leadership of Mario Tascón, who came from the graphic design section of the print paper.²¹⁶ I remember that we said: let's be journalists, it is what we know. Even after many meetings with people from *The Guardian* and *Liberation*, with whom we considered many alluring options, in the end we have done more or less the same as always: last minute news and features, chats and debates, as a complement”. Fernando Mas remembers that it is their philosophy not to join the last online trend: “a few years ago, everybody was talking about aggregators;

²¹⁶ In Tascón's personal explanation. (Díaz Noci, 2005, p. 27)

now social networks... Our attitude is to wait and see.²¹⁷ We have our tenets as journalists and we are not to betray them”. “We are a small team producing this sort of content in a professional way. And readers are accepting our stories very often”, explains Sonia Aparicio,²¹⁸ since 2000 in the digital edition of *El Mundo*. “When our readership decays, we offer these sort of chats or debates that work quite well”, explains Baeta. “For instance, we are now offering *A day in the life of...*, features about ordinary people. We follow someone for hours. Today we are publishing the story of a woman queuing to receive unemployment benefits, who hopelessly says that she would like to get again a job before retiring. We were also with a policeman, a waiter, or an antiques dealer. With 30 pictures we follow their lives. These features are really successful”.

“When we began doing this, in 1996 or 1997, we thought that the Internet was ideal for last minute news. Back then, only CNN was covering this kind of news. Now we have seen that they capture people’s attention. Talking with colleagues, I saw that it creates a need for more and more information. It hooks. People come back many times looking for new details. So, breaking-news is paramount for us.” José Luis Martín (37, Madrid, degree in Journalism, specialist in bull-fighting) is one of the four journalists responsible for the main web page, for last minute news and constant updating. For a long time, he has been working with this type of news and now he understands its dynamics quite well. “breaking-news is powerful, it grips readers very firmly. For us being the first is really important. A few weeks ago, when Spanish air traffic controllers began an unannounced wildcat strike, we were the first to report it because we detected it on Twitter. It was a huge success. We soon realised how important our information was and we concentrated all our available resources on this story. And it was very rewarding.”

It is 9.50 in the morning. Bank shares are falling at the Madrid Stock Exchange, after the Government announced a plan to increase banks capital (especially savings banks, companies that are not publicly traded). “Is it ready?” José Luis is phoning the Finance section to find out whether the story has been done. Beside him three more journalists are checking news-wires. José Luis receives flashes through Twitter. “I do not know why, but breaking-news usually arrives through Twitter 30 seconds before it does by

²¹⁷ *El Mundo* does not operate a *twitter* system on their home page, although it could be followed on this network. Lately, with some relevant events, they have used it.

²¹⁸ Personal interview held on January, 28th, 2011.

wire, despite this being a paid service. This time often is vital for us”.²¹⁹

“Yes, during the first five minutes, we rely on news agencies. But then we begin using our own resources”, explains Baeta.²²⁰ “From minute six onwards we are creating our own framework, context, and so on. Yesterday we wrote about the terrorist attack at a Moscow airport, with 35 deaths. We at first relied purely on news agencies, but soon we began giving more details, our point of view. And many stories are our own.” In fact, about Moscow's attacks, news-agencies basically alerted them about the attack, after which they created additional stories from different angles, including one about some Spanish travellers that could not fly to their Russian destination because their flights were diverted or cancelled. José Luis, who was in charge of this operation, describes it as, “Reuters said 'Two deaths in an explosion at a Moscow's airport'. We had to say just that. This could have been an accident, but we did not know. In this case, it would be less important. We publish what we get as we are informed. Then we may have called our correspondent, but in this case he could have added very few details, except for the fact that he knows Russian”.

Elena alerts José Luis: “A man's killer runs away in Badajoz”. “*Efe?*” “Yes”. “Prepare it and phone Vigario. An armed man on the run can cause disaster. Beware,” advises José Luis. David Vigario is *El Mundo's* correspondent in Badajoz. José Luis opens emails – the common means of communication between the team, inside the building or wherever they are –, checks news agencies and *CNN*, *BBC* and *The Guardian* alternately. “David [Vigario] is aware” is heard at the table. José Luis opens an email from Eduardo Suárez, correspondent in London. It says “Do you want a curious piece of information about mice in Downing Street and Cameron's need for a cat?” It is a story that has been broadcast on British television, so it is known and “we do not save it for the print edition”. “Do it Eduardo. It may be interesting,” writes José Luis back. In 15 minutes, an email with a mini feature arrives from London. The headline is “Cameron wants a cat in Downing Street”.²²¹ José Luis, addressing me, says: “You will see that in a while this story may be leading the ranking”. José Luis is right, but today there will be

²¹⁹ Participant observation on January, 25th, 2011. A personal interview with José Luis Martín had to be held when he was off-duty, on January, 27th, 2011, because during the working time it was impossible to arrange for him to have a talk.

²²⁰ News wires arriving by Twitter are considered as news wires. But lately, a minor part of flashes arrive directly from sources through Twitter.

²²¹ To see it: <http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2011/01/25/internacional/1295948390.html> [accessed on March, 14th, 2011]

many odd pieces of news that will compete with this one. Anyway, at 17.00 it occupies the second place.

Everybody at *El Mundo* is apparently aware that mentioning the word “sex” or even suggesting something related to it in a headline translates into the number of readers rocketing. However, Baeta says that “I am not here to produce the kind of medium that statistics demand. I think that there is something like circles of usage: the common area for most users may be this populist news, but users also look for more important stories. I have to think about everybody and every interest.” Baeta goes to the computer and checks rankings: the most seen story is now of this kind (a tennis player that had lied publicly by saying that she had been attacked by a kangaroo in Australia)²²² but “we have in second place an employment offer from Germany to Spanish workers. I would not have said that this information would be so popular”.

The story about banks, savings banks and their capital has eventually arrived. “Please, Ana, check it” shouts José Luis. “Done” is heard minutes later. “Which one do I delete?” Each time that new information is added to the front page, an old or less interesting story has to be deleted. “The one about Rajoy? It is the response to one of yesterday's story.” He assents.

10.12 in the morning and an email from the Culture section arrives: “Jaime Salinas is dead”. He was a Spanish writer who lived in the United States and lately in Iceland, son of a famous poet. “Yeah. Prepare it. Put it beside Berlusconi's”.

At 10.14, a telephone call. “Tell me, tell me”, says José Luis trying to avoid prefaces and introductions. It has to be Baeta or Mas, the only people above José Luis in the organisation. I guess that they ask him if he is aware that Alvaro de la Iglesia, the president of the Spanish Cinema Academy is very upset with the Ministry of Culture because the new legislation restricting and punishing illegal downloads from the Net is not as harsh as he had demanded. “We are publishing it.” Anyway, once he hangs up the telephone, José Luis goes to the Culture section and talks with a reporter.

Laughter at the table. “Have you seen it?” “Unbelievable”. It is a video from Argentina: a woman is alive after falling down from the 23th floor of a building. The taxi where she landed is now useless due to the crash, but she is alive. “Immediately”, says José Luis.

²²² This is the story that was on the website since the previous day.
<http://www.elmundo.es/elmundodeporte/2011/01/23/tenis/1295780802.html>. [Accessed on July, the 30th, 2011.]

The video will be also in the American edition.²²³

The story about the murder in Badajoz is ready.²²⁴ “Creating front page” shouts José Luis. This shout alerts colleagues not to do the same operation at the same time because it could block the system. José Luis reminds Juan to change ordinary content on the front page: a section with the best pictures, videos of the day, blogs and so on. Part of what Baeta calls ‘the amusement park’, an assortment of content related to the news that are worth spending a while looking at. At the same time, Sports is broadcasting a tennis match online from Melbourne, Berditch against Djokovic. “This is done by Sports; we are not involved”.

Flash from Reuters: “Mevdeved announces a tougher stance against terrorists”. “Do it Elena,” shouts José Luis. Elena responds that it is more or less what was already on the front page, but José Luis, very kindly, disputes it: “no, it is more radical. I do prefer this new story”. A reporter from the Madrid section approaches José Luis: “Look, a trade union is saying that prisoners are attacking Muslim inmates at the Valdemoro prison”.

“Do you know this trade union? Are they reliable? Are they representative?”

“Yes”.

“Do you know this source?”

“Yes, I do. I would trust them.”

“Call the prison managers.”

“I did, but they say that will not comment.”

“Then, prepare it. It is controversial enough. We will open with this.” Addressing Juan, who sits just beside him, and in lower tone: “Please Juan, control comments; these issues provoke virulent responses.”

José Luis and his team are controlling many affairs, topics, relations and dialogs at the same time. Addressing me, he says: “quite a calm day. When things are so quite we move pieces about. We try to balance the front page”. An email from Buenos Aires. “It is not critical. I will send it to Miami for them to explore”. Baeta comes to talk with José Luis. Everybody hears what is being said: some routine questions are asked. More laughs for the woman that fell from 23 floors. “Day of defiance spreads to Lebanon”. It is a story that has been prepared by International. “Publish it, Ana.”

²²³ <http://www.elmundo.es/america/2011/01/25/argentina/1295947841.html> [accessed on March 14th, 2011]

²²⁴ To see the final outcome of this story:
<http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2011/01/25/espana/1295948157.html> [accessed on March 14th, 2011]

“Ready Mevdeved”.

“Upload it. Delete the story about yesterday's reactions to the terrorist attack at the airport”.

“Creating front page”.

Baeta is still here and asks if the story from Buenos Aires is serious and reliable. “Yes, it is full of details. It is on *Clarín* and *La Nación*.” Baeta asks for a video that Coca Cola is diffusing on their webpage that treats Spain as a corrupt country and goes back to his office. José Luis calls Carlos Segovia (at the Economy and Business section) to look for it.

A reporter rushes to the table with his phone and shows a *tweet*: “De la Iglesia has resigned”. A clear swearword spouts from José Luis.

“Where has he said that?”

“In his blog in *El País*”.

More yet stronger swearing. It seems that what really hurts is the news coming from *El País*. “Check it”. José Luis has already opened an application that allows him to put a scroll on top of the website with a rolling message: “breaking-news: De la Iglesia resigns”. It is less than one minute since the news broke at *El País*, though it may be not on its front page. He makes a phone call to Culture: “Right now, check details and write a piece saying that De la Iglesia has resigned. And then try to talk with him”. Many reporters are approaching the central tables to say what they have learnt on radio, television, on the web or on news-wires. More people are coming: “Look, De la Iglesia is replying to his friends on Twitter about his resignation”.

“Shall we say that he announced his resignation in *El País*?”.

“Yes, of course”, says José Luis, who at the same time calls his team for help. Everybody gives up less urgent work. Actually José Luis does not need help, but is very nervous. Then Mas comes. Informed about the decisions already taken, he ratifies them. “Creating front page”. Less than five minutes later, there is a story in *El Mundo* about the De la Iglesia's resignation. They do not check, but perhaps they have done it before *El País* could translate the information from Iglesia's blog to a proper news-story with a headline. Now José Luis calls again to Culture: “Please look for a better picture and prepare a more substantial piece.” They were already doing that. Fernando Mas and José Luis are upset because they were expecting this sort of outcome but it was De la Iglesia

who decided where to announce it.

Gently, a young female journalist approaches José Luis and asks “Can we talk?”

“Is it important?”

“No”.

“So, in a while, when I finish with this crisis”.

Juan: “I have got a second piece about De la Iglesia, from Culture”.²²⁵

“Creating front page.”

The phone rings. “Tell me, Fernando. Yes, it is on the front page. It is not the main headline but as soon as we can have his words it will be opening”. Phoning again to Culture: “Have you got in touch with him? But he is already talking on the radio”.

While on a huge flat screen television set that hangs on a close pillar the Spanish Finance Minister is still giving live a press conference, a reporter from the Finance section approaches José Luis and tells him: “The reporter there says that the deficit has fallen more than expected”.

“Thank you”.

José Luis opens again the application and, while the minister talks, the headline begins to roll as a breaking-news. The reporter goes to her place to write the news. In less than 10 minutes the story is available in an email that José Luis' team upload. The headline says that the deficit has diminished less than expected. “What do you mean, less of a deficit or less of a reduction?”

“Less deficit.”

“Then I will change the headline that is confusing.”

“Ok. Sorry for that.”

“Coca-cola uploaded.”

“Deficit, online.”

“Creating front page”.

The reporter from the Finance section approaches again: “Listen, they have presented the deficit reduction as the most relevant aspect of their report. But, looking in depth, I found that the expenditure has been much higher than expected and the deficit could be reduced just because the taxes were increased. So, there are no real savings but more taxes”.

²²⁵ To see the story redone at 17 hours,
<http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2011/01/25/cultura/1295953311.html> [accessed on March 14th, 2011]

“Well, interesting. Do it”, replies José Luis.

They did not check at all what news-wires were saying about the deficit, they are sure about their own source, Francisco Núñez, a member of the staff whose task was sending the first flash, then the first story, later a longer one for the Net²²⁶ and finally, at the newsroom, producing a more in-depth version of this story, with more details and better framework, for tomorrow's print paper.

“I would say,” Baeta tells me, summarising which their main sources are, “that we have 50 per cent of stories coming from news agencies and the rest from ourselves and other media.” But just for the first few minutes. ■

Again here I see that most stories come from news-wires. At *El Mundo* they accept that half their news comes from this source. They also use their own network of correspondents, other media, and their own staff at the central newsroom, people that are mainly able to cover events in Madrid. Here again, I see how, when asked about the origin of their news, they rush to stress that they use news-wires just for a few minutes, that they do complement them, that many stories are their own. In their journalistic *doxa*, using alien journalistic sources would never give cultural capital and, despite the fact that they look at other journalistic media by the minute, they feel the need to distance themselves from these practices. Again, cultural behaviours, *habitus* acquired through time, will not easily recede.

It is remarkable that for news sources such as governments or big corporations, the fact that, while still giving a press conference, a medium could already be giving an interpretation of what is being said, increases the pressure on their public relations to look at how their messages are being interpreted, to redress uncomfortable interpretations or problematic points of view. It opens new dynamics that could eventually lead to the speaker correcting or nuancing his or her previous words live. A sort of dialogue between the media and news sources in real time. A phenomenon that could be linked to what I saw at *Efe* with an artificial agenda being produced by PR people to create spaces to place the message.

Again, the mixture of speed and immediacy with exclusive news sources generates a new environment threatening the traditional scoop's value. During my stay, I saw a story breaking on *El País* that in less than a minute was on *El Mundo*. So, again, what is the meaning of a scoop that lives for such a short while? No member of the public would

²²⁶ To see the final version of this story:
<http://www.elmundo.es/mundodinerro/2011/01/25/economia/1295954274.html> [accessed on March 14th, 2011]

appreciate the difference. Nor are journalists, who care a lot about who gets there first. Immediacy, instead of feeding the importance of scoops, is limiting them to minutes, removing most of their traditional meaning: being shown as a trophy by journalists to the rest of the professional field. ■

ii. NEWS PRODUCTION AND AGGREGATION

Working with breaking-news means speed and speed equates to taking risks, not having time to check everything, not having time for reflection. “We wrongly said that Marcelino Camacho had died when he was still alive [a former Spanish trade union leader]” explains a remorseful Baeta.²²⁷ “We had checked that news with three different sources. But all of them were wrong. The next day we explained how this mistake took place.²²⁸ On the print edition it would not have happened because all the mess was clarified in a few hours, and it would all have been before the publication. However, online our deadline is permanent. We also published that the American Congresswoman that was attacked at Tucson died. It was a mistake at the Sheriff’s office.²²⁹ But we were wrong in following this lead. We need a little bit more time before publishing. Many more times we chose to be more cautious and we were right.”

Did *El Mundo* take risks when they informed, hours before than other media, that most passengers on board a Spanair plane that crashed in Madrid, had died? “No, we were sure. But we were criticised for that, though being right” says Baeta. It was a journalistic success, although with a very sad story.

Olalla Novoa²³⁰ (degree in Journalism at Madrid, MA at New York University, experience in TV and press in the USA) was in charge of the online edition on August 20th, 2008. Bored due to the very few stories they had to publish, she left to have lunch with a friend. But as soon as she sat down at the restaurant, her telephone rang. It was not yet three o’clock. Of course, a very hot day in Madrid and everybody on holiday, except a minimal team under her command.

“I was told that a commercial plane had crashed and that it could be a serious accident. I

²²⁷ See section 2 iii in Chapter V, about how the same story affected *Efe*.

²²⁸ Explanation of the mistakes:

<http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2010/10/27/comunicacion/1288173187.html> Camacho died two days later. [Accessed March 14th, 2011]

²²⁹ The U.S. Republican congresswoman, Gabrielle Giffords, was attacked in Tucson, Arizona, on Saturday, January the 8th, 2011. She suffered serious injuries while six other persons died.

²³⁰ Personal interview with author on January, the 25th, 2011.

came back as soon as I could, without having lunch, and I found two reporters here, Luis Fernando Durán and Pedro Blasco, from the print paper, that had a source who was in charge of rescue and fire services. Then their first assessment was that most passengers could have died. Later, we heard that all of them, with the exception of a handful, had died. We were the only medium with this information. Initially I resisted publishing this but a second source emerged, again working on site. My colleague put on the loud-speaker of his mobile phone and I heard that except for a small number of people, all of the crew and passengers were inside the already fully burnt plane structure. Then we dared to say that the death toll could be more than 100, when all media were still declaring about a dozen. And later we said more than 140 when the Police had just confirmed 40. But we were absolutely sure, not only our reporters but their two sources were well known and very professional. I remember that my bosses were on other side of the phone line asking for our sources, and I gave them my assurances about that data. I think that we were very prudent, we were aware of what our story could mean for families, and we informed only when we had no doubts”.²³¹

Yaiza Perera (34 years, 12 years at *elmundo.es*) accepts the fact that her work has the pressure of time, “but it does not mean superficiality. We are obliged to understand quickly what a story is about and make decisions about how important what we are receiving is. We decide in seconds. It is true that we offer an advance first, but as soon as we can we offer more information, more details, more of a framework and even analysis”.²³²

Olalla Novoa remembers that “it was also a critical moment when Michael Jackson died. And died in Los Angeles, where we do not have our own sources. It is not our environment. We had got what *TMZ* had published. *TMZ* had little reputation, although it was a specialist in this kind of news. For us it was not reliable enough and we decided to wait for the *Los Angeles Times*. When they repeated the story, then we did the same, always citing the source. Jackson is a very well-known person and we cannot kill people to later resuscitate them.”

Sonia Aparicio and her team of four produce about 20 big multimedia features a year and much more material of less complexity. “Four of them, I would say, are superb. We

²³¹ To see the day of the accident final information:

<http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2008/08/20/espana/1219237335.html> [accessed on March 14th, 2011]

²³² Personal interview with author on January, 26th, 2011, complemented by a questionnaire sent by email in February, 2011.

employ all of our resources, technicians, designers, journalists, correspondents. Right now we are rushing to finish one of these 'specials' about Nelson Mandela [who has just been taken into hospital] to be published if he dies. We have done many more. I am very proud about one on The Beatles, for instance.²³³ Now we are also producing one about 'Biutiful' [the Spanish movie, with Penelope Cruz] and Barcelona. What we do first is to design a plan, with a list of themes, and then for each of them we create videos, graphics, often displaying interactivity, sound, and even games with prizes. Some of our products were later sold with the newspaper as CDs. But they are on the Net, to be seen.²³⁴ When they are on the homepage, it is astonishing how well they work. The one about the Beatles became one of the most viewed stories. A success. We are very proud. Of course, we believe that dense content is possible online, as long as you adapt the presentation to the Net, to its language.”

Sonia reckons that “we were learning the tricks of these matters here, at the same time as producing features. It is interesting because readers access our content in the way they want. We did not copy from others. It is our ideas. We work as a team. And it works. We are proud of it.” All these features are linked to relevant hard news, it is in fact a multimedia way of presenting these stories.

For Fernando Mas “these features bring us a lot of readers. It transforms the relationship with users into a true experience. We offer them many different things at the same time”. He refers to all those products that Baeta names as “the amusement park,” and adds that “it is usually said that people do not watch long videos. It is not true, few days ago we offered an interview with a person who was a hidden spy inside a terrorist group and it worked very well despite being quite long. 80 thousand followers for a 12 minute interview”.

Olalla Novoa, who herself is working on producing new content, says that “Internet users are changing. They also are learning how to use the Net and then they spend more time using it. Some of them are just looking for a summary of what happens. It is typical when you access it at your office. But we have online readers that come to see things in detail. Maybe they are specialists looking for good quality information. We are now producing interviews that are between 20 and 30 minutes long with newsmakers. Those who like these interviewees will watch these videos. We are now exploring these niches.

²³³ To see this feature: <http://www.elmundo.es/beatles/index.html> [accessed March 14th, 2011]

²³⁴ The main access to these features: <http://www.elmundo.es/especiales/> [accessed March 15th, 2011]

And they work.”

Also in this line, parallel to hard news, “we are now developing a project that consists of analysing regions, countries. This week we will study Tunis. It is a lot of information, with some blogs being written by our correspondents that are very popular. They explain how people live in different places around the globe, from a Spanish perspective, paying attention to aspects of daily life that are very interesting but are not represented in the media”, says Novoa, who is coordinating this new feature . ■

Being so fast online (they use Twitter to access to news-agencies just to get some stories 30 seconds before they come through wires), risks swell. If they get it wrong they blame the high pressure they work under. Even when they have checked their information they can get it wrong or, as in the case of the plane crash, they can be right but lack the confidence needed to give all the information they have. The Internet as a tool is too fast even for these journalists that have spent most of their lives working online: they would appreciate working more slowly. They say that they do their best to avoid mistakes but, they happen and they happen more often than they used to. They usually are caused when using alien sources that, as in the case of Michael Jackson's death or the Tucson killing, they are not familiar with. Then risks rise to unbearable levels. It is not only a matter of credibility, but of speed.

They posit that they can get people spending time online, against what is generally predicated about online reading and attention. It is a way of showing that they are now controlling the new environment, the new media logic. From their experience, it is necessary to combine all available tools to attract readers: text, graphics, video, sound, interactivity, multimedia in its full expression. In this sense, they create what are plainly new genres, new formats. They have been using live chats for a long time and they are now satisfied with them and with the way audiences have adapted to them; they are producing multimedia features about a day in someone's life and they are popular; they are experimenting with long interviews with interesting but not very popular people in order to find a new niche. They also use their correspondents to explain facts of daily life in different countries. Their experience comes from a trial and error method. They have discarded many failed ways of doing things and are pursuing those that are more in accordance with journalists' beliefs and, even more paramount, accepted by users. For instance, their evening newspaper (in pdf) clearly failed. It is a way of creating a new online *habitus*, a new online logic. This is the only studied newsroom, where mostly the same team of people, after more than a decade, are confident about what they produce and how it is accepted by the public. Nevertheless, they do stress that it is a journalistic

product, where they design, control and deliver the content. ■

iii. DISTRIBUTION OF CONTENT

Journalists at *El Mundo* know that when they publish a story, their approach, their interpretation, their focus will probably become the standard one, because many other media outlets will follow them. Most journalists remember situations in which they were the reference for others. Yaiza Perera tells me that “I know and I am fully conscious of our influence upon other media. For instance, few weeks ago, we published a story that has been in international news for days. Only when we published it did other media realised its value and followed it for days.” José Luis Martín shares her colleague’s opinion: “We know that many media publications follow us. Sometimes it is flattering, but it is also frustrating. When we identify something more relevant in the middle of a story, and our headline points to it, it is frustrating seeing that many others soon reproduce our approach. Our approach is not to follow others, but to fix our own view. As far as it is possible we do it.” Fernando Mas ratifies his colleague’s views. “We know that radios and televisions check our website, because they know that our goal is to be the first. In the end, for these media, we are replacing news agencies, because we offer the same information but within a hierarchical format that allows them to see at a glance what is important”.

Despite being at the front of *elmundo.es* since 2006, Baeta still has not come to terms with the huge impact of the online edition. “This is a phenomenon. Politicians are following us by the minute. No one can imagine how concerned they are about what we say. We have much more impact than the print newspaper.”

When this mass of readers access *elmundo.es* every morning, looking for a quick description of what is happening, they find a front page with a hierarchy of stories, with an implicit and relative value for each of them. This selection is kept online just few minutes. Trying to show an evolving reality, this front page changes constantly. Even, when no news is coming, they “shake” them to present another image, to transmit an idea of newness.

“Yes”, accepts José Luis, when asked about this constant flux. “It works as a market, as a balance between what we have on offer and what is coming. Sometimes we have too much influx of information and we cannot limit it. News is not objectively news, but in

relation to other stories. Sometimes a story that could have opened the page one day, does not get space at all on other day. But we try to offer different kind of news. We are constantly looking for spaces in which to put more material. Now, instead of deleting a story, we convert it to an image and it becomes accessible through other windows. We try to maximise our space. But in the end it is a matter of give and take. Some days you have to invent stories.”²³⁵ Is this worse than in print media or on television? “No, it also happens on television and in the print press.”

Yaiza Perera gives me another approach to the same phenomenon: “When the topic is important, it will stay on the front page, but we may change the focus. These sorts of topics should be on the front page for at least two or three hours. But sometimes it must change. We are constantly weighing topics and taking decisions. Some topics, less temporal ones, can be saved for when the influx of news is weaker.”

“Sometime in the past, we used to produce a home page that could fit into just one screen, but not now. We have seen that people demand a full homepage, longer if needed, but that gives a full idea about what is happening. So we gave up short screens” explains Baeta. Sergio Rodríguez has been studying the phenomenon of the front page: “What is not there does not exist. The front page is too powerful. We have problems solving this concentration of readers and diverting them to other pages. We have good content that is hugely popular only when it is on the front page and dies as it is removed to other places.” ■

About fifty per cent of users only visit *El Mundo*'s front page: users tend to concentrate their attention just there. Journalists make a constant effort to find spaces to put up new stories that might be attractive. See that on the Net, where space is limitless, journalists struggle to put every important story on the front page, the home page, to reproduce the traditional print model of the front page, and allow the public at a glance to have an idea of what has been happening around them.

Moreover, this information does not need to be radically new, it might have been there for hours, under other headlines, and now is presented in new clothes, as if it was new, and especially in a new shape (again 'churnalism'). This means that they force some events to become news, to being presented as something fresh.

Years ago, they tried (and failed) to use just a small front page (one scroll long) but users showed that they were not impressed. It is remarkable how the dynamics of the print

²³⁵ It is an idiomatic Spanish phrase that means magnifying but not inventing stories.

front page is reproduced on the online medium, pressing for space with a technology that allows for as much space as needed.

They reckon that sometimes they have to “create” news, or to reformulate what has already been on display for a while. They say that, depending on the flow, some valuable and interesting stories could be accessed by readers for a very short period of time, after which more and newer content arrives. So, as with the print press, value in news seems to be relative.

At *El Mundo* again they confirm that politicians and other newsmakers follow the Net very carefully. I was not told here about the pressures they are under, but that they are being carefully watched by newsmakers and are seen as agenda shapers for other media groups. Here again, they are aware that many other media groups will follow their interpretations, their agenda, their priorities. Many others will mimic them, perhaps profiting from the speed that throws a dense mist onto who is copying and who is being copied.

They have no clue about the hypertext and its functions, having nothing else but some sporadic link to their own site. ■

3. PROFESSIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL MATTERS

Sergio Rodríguez is an specialist in interactivity with readers. He understands that now journalism lives in a very unstable environment, where changes are sudden and fast. “We need to be very agile to react, to adapt to new situations. It is very difficult to keep apace with online innovation. Journalistic companies, with their present internal organisation, are not prepared to adapt to these changes. We are prepared to cope with any relevant and historical event, but not with the kind of changes that the electronic world is bringing on a daily basis. Our operational structure is rigid. A journalist adapts to a big story, but not to a technological change. Our advantage is that we produce content, but a technological organisation is faster and more flexible than we are.” For Rodríguez, it is a clear cultural clash between these two worlds.

It is a long time since technology and journalism met, but there is still a long way ahead. The integration of these two cultures is not unproblematic and easy. Baeta, who has spent all his life at *El Mundo*, remembers that “the print people did not like working for a money-losing publication such as ours. Then, later, when it became clear that their influence was diminishing and ours growing, attitudes slowly changed. Today the web is

profitable despite not being a huge business, it has readers and influence. Now our mates tend to accept us. The old rules are dead. Now, most of the newsroom cooperates with us, and we are mixing much better.” This assertion must be seen under the umbrella of Bourdieu: the new medium is now considered as journalism, able to produce capital, to have an *habitus*, and a *doxa*. And perhaps Baeta is too optimistic: the new reality is in progress but, as I now show, it still needs more time to be fully recognised.

It is Wednesday morning. Very early. About eight. Our appointment was early, but when I arrive Fernando Baeta is already working at his desk, in a glass office, with the door open, as always. He is frantically making calls at the same time with his mobile and the land-line phone. He seems upset and nervous. “Yes, someone in the newsroom knew that there was going to be an agreement between the Government and trade unions about pensions, and did not tell the Internet team. The integration, you see, is not yet fully done.” He phones more people and in half an hour the online edition changes and opens with the story of a very late night agreement. A journalist from Politics could retrace trade-unionists and Government officials, and wrote the story. Baeta is now more relaxed. He has solved the failure quite early and not many people may have noted the fault. “We still have some problems, especially when we have an exclusive story. Shall we save it for the print edition or not? The criterion is that in case of risk, publish it. Nevertheless sometimes we save something and then we see it on other media. It is very frustrating”, reckons Baeta. “Last week we knew the name of a new political party being created in Asturias, but after a meeting, we decided to publish it in the print edition. It was late, during the day a radio broadcast the name and so, we missed our scoop”. José Luis Martín says that “we also think and sometimes have ideas about some stories, but if the print newsroom is working on them, we have to stop and look for something else”. They are professionally frustrated.

When they have, as they do now, a journalist in Tunis, sending information about the uprising²³⁶ “we only use what is widely known, what will be on every other media, and those features that are light, less decisive. Rosa Meneses is there and it would be ridiculous not to mention her as our source. If a new Government were formed in Tunis, we would publish the information citing our special correspondent. Nevertheless, the

²³⁶ When this field work was done, Ben Ali had already flown from Tunis and in Cairo, Egypt, had broken the news about the first riots against Mubarak.

best features and the deepest analysis are for the print edition. We understand it”, explains Baeta.

Sonia Aparicio has been with the online edition from the very beginning. “Things have improved a lot. When I began we worked for a different company. We were the odds, the rare people. Not anymore. Nevertheless, even today the paper is the company's priority. Sometimes we are forced to give them some stories. There are still some hints of us being second class. For instance, they can publish everything that they want on the web, but it isn't the case when we want to publish on the paper.” In theory, José Luis Martín can give orders to print reporters, because he has the same authority as their section's bosses, although sometimes they collide. “It is a permanent and unavoidable conflict, if not with one section, with the other. In the end, it all depends on people and their attitudes. The web used to be a minor business, a second class product, somehow amateur. Not anymore, now the organisation has improved. Despite that, there are still adjustments to do. We need to realise that we are a free product and that our situation is different from the print paper. Deciding in this environment, when things are developing fast, in a matter of minutes, is not easy.”

Is multi-tasking a problematic issue here? José Luis Martín has a clear reply: “we are using much more video. A few years ago I would not imagine a story without text. Not now. Today we have pieces that are just images, without text. We still have a long way to go. I do not believe in the concept of a one-man band, that takes pictures, writes, records sounds, footage and does everything. We believe in specialists. We need to offer an acceptable quality. We have people that never write and of course they are very useful.” Baeta basically shares José Luis' explanation: “a website is absolute journalism. It is what is said, seen, written. We care about giving readers our stories in the best container. We have people who are just producing videos. Sometimes just voice work. In my opinion, here we have already won this battle. Everybody accepts this new situation and it is not a controversial issue”. Sonia Aparicio produces this kind of story, using every platform. She has no complaints about multi-tasking. “When we began it was just written journalism. Today it is a mix of written and audiovisual. We are more professional.” She counts with a team of TV producers and cameras when needed. At the nearer tables, her team is editing videos, mixing them with text and so on.

Sergio Rodríguez, himself a journalist, demands more quality in the profession. “We

clearly have a credibility problem. People do not trust us. They look to the newspaper to have a rough idea about what has been happening, but they do not trust us. And this is due to our lack of professionalism. Many journalists are performing poorly. Sometimes I get ill from hearing technology news and seeing that they do not know what they are talking about. Those who are specialists realise that sometimes journalism requires very low qualifications. We have to solve this. We have to regain credibility.” ■

Would a reader imagine that a member of the print newsroom was unable to give information to the online edition? Would someone outside the journalistic field understand these internal conflicts? Yes, if we look at them under the light of Bourdieu's theoretical approach: these journalists are involved in a struggle for capital, for prestige, they want to be seen by other members of the field as relevant, so it is not easy to get a story and give it to a colleague, even at the same company; it is not easy to find a good story and have to leave it for the print edition. “We also think” says Martín ironically, referring to the fact that they, the online team, may find some stories for themselves which they are asked to reserve for the print edition, if they believe that such pieces would not be published online by anyone else. Despite Baeta saying that the integration of the two newsrooms “is a won battle”, this is still today, a decade and a half later, a source of internal conflict. Everybody is looking for his or her own capital, making it difficult to give up loot.

El Mundo seems to have solved the multi-tasking issue. Here, the managers reject, in general, the idea of a journalist doing many different tasks at the same time. They do have a team of people filming but journalists are in full charge of editing, mixing content, deciding how to present their stories. They still reckon that there are underlying problems, related to cultural values: Martín is still surprised by the fact that some stories do not have text. ■

4. THE AUDIENCE AND ITS INTERACTIONS.

“If you want a medium where interaction with readers is welcome, I am afraid that *elmundo.es* is not the place you are looking for,” says Baeta. At least not until now. Olalla Novoa puts it very clearly in other terms: “This is what we have, this is our offer, if you like... But there are other offers online. I believe that journalism is still needed because the influx of information is so huge that no one has time to see and check everything, except in some specific cases, perhaps a blogger. Our task as filters, as

selectors not censors, will continue”. Somewhere in on web, rather hidden, there is an access to something that can be called citizen journalism. “We do not want to give it much visibility because if someone has valuable information, it is better to come to us and talk. We will investigate everything that could possibly lead us to a story,” says Baeta.

Anyway, at *El Mundo* they try to understand their readers' behaviour. They know that they come to the website to gain a rough idea about what is happening around the world. Fernando Mas has all the details: his research shows that in an ordinary weekday, from 8 to 10 in the morning, the number of readers is the highest; then it declines. After midday, it bounces back, now looking for alternative content such as chats, interviews, science, features. And late in the day, America is the main source of users. Fewer people go deeply into news online than in print. 822,000 readers (per day), almost one in two, just read the homepage, get an idea and leave. They spend less time than they would on a newspaper: the average page is read for slightly less than 2 minutes. A reader looks at 7 pages and in all stays 9 minutes at *El Mundo's* site. A few minutes is the average.

And who they are? Not exactly the same as for the print paper. Actually they are younger. “Yes, we see it because issues related to the environment work online much better than on paper. Topics about technology also are very much welcomed. We care much more about these sorts of issues and less about politics.” Baeta relates these preferences to their readers' age. “Younger than readers of the paper, clearly.”²³⁷ So, people read less online than on paper. “This is true”, reckons Baeta. But he adds that “despite reading less *prima facie*, in the end people read more. But the way people read has changed. No one reads more than two scrolls. People read what they are interested in, not only what we think they are interested in. When you realise this you can succeed. We cannot do online what we used to do on paper.”

Sergio Rodríguez²³⁸ (30 years old) has worked only on the digital edition since he entered the company. “Most of our users have a solid habit of accessing our web. Many users reach our site by clicking our address. Then there is the group that come from Google. Anyway, the online logic compares with the radio: the number of sites you visit is very limited. A wider range than with the print press, but still limited. People are used

²³⁷ A perception consistent with studies all around the world. The OECD's research shows that in every country, without exceptions, people younger than 34 years is accessing the Net more than older than that age. (OECD, 2010, p. 79)

²³⁸ Personal interview on February, the 28th, 2011.

to two or three news sites, but not many more. Then they have some favourite sites for personal hobbies. We have many *El País* newspaper readers that access our website. And this is not easy to change”. So, initially, they detect a limited mobility due to a high level of loyalty to sites that are familiar.

“We care about what our readers say. We read everything we get from them. We try to respond to everybody”, adds Rodríguez. But this openness does not break the clear boundary almost impassable between professionals and amateurs, between the media and the public, between journalists and readers. Fernando Baeta is crystal clear: “Citizen journalism can be valid, but not here”. Fernando Mas, with less radical words, says the same. “I do not believe in big media working with citizen journalism. We need to trust in our people. Citizen journalism is a popular but not a realistic topic. How many citizen journalists are there? People have websites where they publish their pictures, that they design and share comments on, but they do not produce news. We just publish what we have checked ourselves. The nearest content to citizen journalism we have is commentary on news stories. And we will change this because under the protection of anonymity many users insult and offend.”

Baeta assumes that the Net is more adapted to reader's wishes and needs, but it is still closed to them. “A good journalist will write what he believes in. There is always some subjectivity. But we offer what we offer and do not go into other issues. We keep our values in mind when we choose stories, what we think could be more interesting to our public. Sometimes we are wrong and act as if we were just producing for journalists and politicians. This is less visible on the Net, but it still can happen. Sometimes we offer stories that are unusual and they work well.”

Every reporter decides which news stories can be commented on by readers and for how long. When I was at the central table, José Luis ordered Juan, another reporter, to be aware of comments on a story about Muslims in prisons because “this can be very controversial”. As for the rest of the stories, apparently they do not care what is said, but neither was José Luis concerned about having opened the option to receive comments.

In addition to comments, Rodríguez explains that from time to time they offer polls, raffles and very occasionally still ask for pictures. José Luis admits that “we used to ask for pictures when there was a snowfall or something like that, but today it is useless” because there are many webpages where they are more accessible and can be seen in

better quality. Rodríguez explains that every week they open the option to comment on some controversial football moments, linked to footage, or “we ask what people would do if, for instance, they were mayors of their own villages or towns. In a few hours we got more than 400 responses with this question. How people react depends on many different factors. For instance, Google did not want to make public which streets they will be filming for their Google Earth application. Instead we asked people to tell us if they have seen their special vehicles and, from the collected information we were able to reconstruct every step they had taken, with a map and timetables.” “We are very strict in moderating participation but in some cases we have to delete as many offensive comments as things we publish” explain Rodríguez. “For instance, when Michael Jackson died, the frequency of offensive comments was too high. The same happens with football and political issues. But we are going to discontinue with this practice: in a few weeks’ time we will be demanding full identification from people before taking part. It will mean a reduction in numbers, but we expect an improvement in the quality of comments²³⁹.”

There is some additional interaction with readers in chat features. *El Mundo* began using them a decade ago and is still having chat sessions almost daily. “Chat sessions have been constantly improving. The public has also learned how to employ this tool and now questions are much better. “In the beginning,” says Baeta, “they often asked absurd questions. Not now. There is a selection and today with some issues, such as the economy, research and technology, participants are very qualified and they seem to be prepared for our guest.” This is a new genre, developed on the Net, which is working very well and implies an interaction”. ■

The Net offers a much greater variety than it ever has been. Does it mean in reality that users are surfing whatever online medium is available? Absolutely not. Online readers do not change easily from one news provider to another. At *El Mundo* they believe that readers just have a small number of sites that they visit regularly and once they get used to them their loyalty is quite high. So, this is how they explain the fact that, despite offering less content²⁴⁰ than *El País*, despite having fully closed access to the print edition, *El Mundo* is still leader and in one year they have increased their readership by

²³⁹ Since April 2011, *El Mundo* has applied this policy.

²⁴⁰ *El País* offers the full print edition on its website, plus the online one, while *El Mundo* has erected a paywall for the print one.

10 per cent.

Baeta reckons that, “in the end,” people are not reading less than before, but they read what they want. They are in command. They choose. For Baeta, the sooner a journalist understands this, the better he or she will adapt to the Net. Another of those myths found in my first field work has fallen.

Although at *El Mundo* they do not believe in citizen journalism, they give readers a say. Not only by allowing chatroom sessions, but also by sometimes asking readers to take part in things. They say that when readers are asked to do something very clear and specific, they get a good level of participation. *El Mundo's* management defends the fact that they have a product and people are free to choose. This is how things used to be and how they still are here. Couldry said that the media, as a concept that links the parts of society working mainly in a unilateral way, can still play a relevant role (2009, p. 447) and *El Mundo* are confident about this. ■

5. CONCLUSION

Of the four media outlets I have researched, *El Mundo* is the one at which ideas seem more firm and stable, as far as they can be stable in an environment where change is the rule. They have followed the same path since they were born; Mas, Martín, Novoa and Aparicio have been there from the first day; they have a clearer idea of what they want, and they seem to have learned lessons about how the Net works, its language, how readers relate to it, what the advertising industry looks for and how sources behave. Because they are the world leaders in Spanish, they are no longer a marginal part of their professional field. They are more respected and valued. But they are still suffering the countless difficulties of developing a completely new medium, with a new logic. Of all studied newsrooms, *El Mundo* is the medium furthest away from the most conservative and traditional conception of journalism, in Lewis' terms (2012). They have adopted many online characteristics, and they are already familiar with many of them, but I would not say that they are approaching a situation at which they share their function with audiences; perhaps they are further away than ever.

Journalists on the online and print editions are part of the same professional field, sharing the same newsroom. Internally, they struggle for social and cultural capital, regardless of which edition they work for. In this sense, we must realise how journalists at the online edition initially felt that their output attracted fewer readers and did not

seem relevant. Later, as soon as more people was used to this medium and sources began asking journalists for their statements to feature on the website, as they realised that it reaches more people than the paper, their field attitude began to change: it became a journalistic activity that gave prestige, recognition. Then, slowly, after a decade and a half, they are not looked down any more. “The old rules are dead”, Baeta finally claims. “We are mixing much better.”

After years of experiments, *El Mundo*'s offerings can be classified into two groups: breaking-news and a type of new journalistic feature developed just for the online medium. So, their production has been simplified into two kinds of content, one of which, the breaking-news, is paramount and the other less so, consisting of a list of features that work very well and that have been adapted for the Net. They are complementary: they work on the features when no breaking-news demands their attention, and readers prefer these sorts of features when nothing new is coming.

The content of these features ranges from live football, tennis matches and F-1 races to chats, videos, interviews, high-quality multimedia features, simple stories about ordinary people and in-depth interviews for niche parts of the readership, with artists, community leaders and qualified social actors. Sometimes this output includes complex and very laborious features, fully designed for the Net. They confess that they found their formula by the simple method of trial and error, being cautious and not taking too many risks. And it works. They do confirm that detailed content, when adapted to the language of the Internet, making it more interactive, more visual, using the best platforms in each case, works very well. At the same time, although initially people read less, as they visited the site more frequently, they read more. They know that they can still sell the same products using alternative, more suitable methods: selling less content but more times.

It can be seen that this model is roughly the one that Boczkowski (2010) hints as emerging in most Argentinian online media and also has some points in common with what Steensen (2009) refers to in Norway. As Steensen mentions, there has been an emergence of certain online genres: breaking-news and online features, stories that profit from the new possibilities that have become available on the Internet, that employ those online characteristics that have been described many times but rarely fully employed.

El Mundo's online section always keeps its readers, and the product they are looking for, in mind, in a way that Boczkowski describes thus: "people who accessed online news at work would best be served by a large range of breaking and developing stories which are constantly updated, to keep them coming back to the site numerous times during the day." (2010, p. 2). And they also realised from their experience that when readers have more time or when hard news stories are not forthcoming, they will demand a "handful of attention-grabbing features [...] to entertain them [...]" (2010, p. 2).

Despite the fact that the Net has opened up a new kind of logic, such as hyperlinking for instance, with users exploring different paths at the same time, opening new discourses, assuming the power to shape the front page themselves, after fifteen years, at *El Mundo* they know that all that is topical must be on one page, against the technical capabilities of the Net. Users do look for a unique space where topicality is concentrated, struggling for a corner, where hierarchies of content are clearly seen, where they can get an impression of the day's events at a glance. In a medium where there are no restrictions of space, readers still demand that all stories are compressed onto just one page. Occasionally the social adoption of a type of technology, what is known as "domestication," the process through which users get know, realize, adopt or reject a technical option can be seen and described in clearer terms as in this case (Silverstone, 1994; Moores, 1996; Haddon, 1991 and 1992; Bakardjieva, 2005): it does not matter what is on offer, but what is chosen.

What Castells described as a theoretical space of flow must be the same thing as I witnessed at most of the online newsrooms that I went to, where one article will be written in a taxi in Bilbao, another in Cairo or in Bogotá whilst a team selects pictures in Miami. The Net is the medium that also links *El Mundo* readers in the United Kingdom with those in Chile.

All these things demand technology but journalists act as users, never as technicians or programmers. During all of the stages of my visits to these four newsrooms, I heard the name of an IT application only once, from José Luis Martín at *El Mundo*, who told me that now the improvement in communications is so important that they venture to use Flash applications because they run well over all aspects of the Net.

Chapter VIII

Conclusions

Journalists are now less powerful, competing with more agents and
look for a compromise with the new online culture

*“Our values are the same: we are journalists and we will always be journalists.
This is what we know. We have our tenets as journalists and we will not betray them.
If the profession is to change, let the next generation do it, not us”.*

Fernando Mas²⁴¹

²⁴¹ Deputy editor at *elmundo.es* in a personal interview with author, January the 24th, 2011.

1. CONTEXT

After 15 years since the introduction of the Internet in our society, the traditional media system in which journalists were the only mediators between newsmakers and large audiences has changed radically. Now, citizens are able to publicly communicate any information they want, and audiences have the choice of either listening to journalistic media or to a wide range of alternative sources. In many occasions, even newsmakers themselves, who can now avoid unpleasant mediators altogether, “the press,” to put it colloquially. A number of scholars rushed to study this phenomenon; the potential of this revolution in social communications in terms of accessibility and plurality has by now been explored. Scholars have investigated how this so-called revolution affects the power structure of our society and the media business, how it influences the public sphere and its political consequences, and how new languages and social interrelations are emerging. They have looked at how the new players behave – those that could be perceived by journalists as the ‘invaders’ –, and how much these new actors challenge the journalistic profession itself. These scholars have often worked from what could be termed as a macro-perspective, that is to say, often looking at things as part of a much wider cultural revolution, and also from an institutional prism. Their research has mostly been carried out in developed countries.

The present thesis has explored such digital transformation, but more so from the side of the ‘invaded’, those journalists who in the past virtually were the sole mediators in mass communication. More precisely, I have studied Spanish journalists in their real daily routine, seeing them as players who, in their practices, have to deal not only with a micro-scale, but also with the real and far-reaching consequences of the Net. Subsequently, they have had to change their way of working, and have had to share their traditional mediating power, their former privileged position, with the aforementioned new entrants. This work has focused on the endeavours of those journalists who come from the traditional newsroom – mostly print – and have to adopt new practices for the online service, while competing in a new yet very unstable and changing environment. It explores the unique situation of a professional group, with a strong set of values and practices who, in a relatively short period of time, have been confronted with a radically new situation.

This research has articulated the behaviour of journalists as a collective under the

theoretical umbrella of Pierre Bourdieu's sociology of practice. The French sociologist has provided the present investigation with a tool that has enabled the decodification of individual and collective attitudes of journalists, while framing them in the play of a field game, where actors are experiencing a clash between their professional *habitus* and the new challenging demands. Bourdieu's theory has proven as ideal for studying, analysing and understanding the rigidity of established structures of behaviour and at the same time, facilitating tools to see how these *fields* and *habitus* deal with innovations and unexpected changes. It has revealed the key to understanding the responses of journalists to the current transformations, to the reasons why they feel so close to each other, and why they have such similar attitudes towards other social groups and practices.

The findings in my research have shed light onto the following areas: (a) the sociocultural process of the Internet adoption by journalists, and (b) the new professional practices that are emerging as a consequence of this negotiation. Each of these areas can subsequently be divided into phenomena already seen in other places and now described in this particular environment and new practices or approaches, developed for the first time in this particular context, that the research has endeavoured to unravel and should now be investigated in wider areas.

2. A SOCIO CULTURAL CLASH

I have studied four very representative newsrooms of Spain (*Diario de Mallorca*, *Efe*, *El País* and *El Mundo*) which are living under the specific conditions of their local journalistic field, and the political economy of the media industry (see section 5, chapter III). My findings are similar in essence, at the same time they are also rich in diversity. Because they come from different backgrounds, each of these institutions produces a different context within which journalists understand the transformations that their professional world is undergoing. This is precisely what gives richness to the present investigation: some of these workplaces and journals have always been leaders in their respective markets (*Diario de Mallorca* and *El País*); or a professional reference for competitors (*El País* and *Efe*), or seen as the challenging innovative underdog more often than not (*El Mundo*). Their inherited cultures have a decisive influence on the

process of adopting the Internet.

These four newsrooms were studied under virtually identical historical, geographical, social and cultural conditions. The journalists in these newsrooms are well informed about how the Internet is impacting their profession around the world.²⁴² The question thus becomes how to explain the very different conceptions and approaches towards the Net, from the most reluctant *Diario de Mallorca* or some sections at *Efe*, to the most open at *El Mundo*. Each of these newsrooms present a different attitude, which is in turn related to their *habitus*, their relative position in the newsroom, the professional field, their place in the market, and their stage in what they see as a journey to a new model.

i. THE JOURNEY

The journalistic adoption of the Internet, as it emerges from my research, is very often perceived and described by journalists as an imagined journey, where the departing point is perhaps the idealised classical way of doing journalism, in broad terms what happened for most of the 20th century²⁴³, and the arrival point is an undefined and uncertain model, whose existence no-one can guarantee – be reminded of the recent concept in Lewis' paper of a transition from traditional journalism, to another, more participative and interactive with audiences (2012) or of Robinson's idea of a “journey” towards the cyber-newsroom (2009).

Most journalists interviewed in the present thesis interpreted this journey as one taking place in a rather dystopian environment; a murky, contradictory, even misty path that inevitably leads to an unknown destination. They believe, or want to believe, that in the end, this model will settle down, stabilise, build its own logic in full, but in the meantime, journalists in this situation, especially those leading the race, have to learn its rules by trial and error. The difference between this narrative to that of Lewis is that journalists in my research seem to still believe that it will be them who will shape the characteristics of the final stage, while scholars do not give them much say. Anderson

²⁴² Mas, at *El Mundo*, for instance, states that they were in touch with most international media companies to design their online newspaper but, in the end, they did what they themselves wished. At *El País*, they are very well informed about what is happening with online journalism, as Lafuente and Altares show when talking respectively about *The Huffington Post* or *The New York Times*. And, at *Efe*, Romero was comparing stories brought by the conventional Reuters news agency or the more experimental Columbia University.

²⁴³ The departing point could be the model described by Herbert Gans (Gans, 2004/1979, p. XVII-XVIII), stable for decades, the way of doing journalism (values and working routines) or, as seen by Domingo et al, 2008, p. 327) that “had remained highly stable for almost a century”.

dares to point at a model where stories are arranged hierarchically in an automatic manner (2011a), something journalists are radically opposed to.²⁴⁴

ii. MODIFYING THE *HABITUS*

The collective journalistic *habitus*, as a body of internalised knowledge, behaviour and shared practice is one of the key actors in this transition to the digital platform: the longer the contact with the Net, the more assimilated the practices and its meanings; the bigger the experience, the weaker the objections to novelty. Having said this, in order to understand how online culture has rooted itself within the four media, one must identify the discrete stages the respective newsrooms have found themselves in. The more advanced of them have had a longer interaction with the new technology; their adaptation to the logic of the latter is therefore better. The *habitus* is shaped as a result of daily and routine experiences; neither training nor reading seems to be replacing the importance of practice. At *El País*, where journalists seem to realise that their future lies in the online medium, they therefore desperately demand more time to sediment the changes²⁴⁵.

The present investigation has detected that online journalists focus their daily efforts towards negotiating the demands from the Net with their *habitus* and channelling the new online emerging values through the eye of the needle of their traditional professional culture. Never before has their work been questioned as is being interrogated nowadays, to the point that their new ecosystem²⁴⁶ is now in direct conflict with their past, and their relationships with print colleagues. This is taking place in newsrooms themselves – the physical space is not to be overlooked –, under a collective *habitus* that demands time to be slowly modified, to evolve, sediment and recreate.

There is evidence galore of this evolution in this investigation: the Internet lacks means of authentication, a problem that still worries journalists at *Diario de Mallorca* and *Efe*

²⁴⁴ Seth Lewis (2012) or CW Anderson (2011a, 2011b) also describe this process as a transition from a very conservative model, to a more open one. Although, while these scholars seem to make a good description of the arrival point, journalists dispute it: they do not see so clearly that the journalistic role will be as weak as it is described and hope to have a more relevant function.

²⁴⁵ Fernando Gualdoni, at *El País*. Remember that the *El País'* newsroom has only a year of experience with the Net, despite the company having been online for more than a decade. Previously, there was another company providing this online edition, while the print one was just producing the paper. He reminds me that they are like Turkish coffee, that needs time to sediment.

²⁴⁶ In Neil Postman's sense (2000). See section 2 I, chapter II.

but not those at *El Mundo*. A fear of being flooded with more information that can possibly be handled, on the other hand, something that alarms *Efe* and *Diario de Mallorca*, does not arise as a relevant matter for neither *El País* nor *El Mundo*. Last, but not least, multitasking, that concerns journalists to the point of calling an industrial action at *Efe*, does not seem to worry at *El Mundo* at all.²⁴⁷

iii. EVOLUTION

The collective *habitus* has been found to be different in each of the investigated newsrooms, as each of them is in a distinct stage in their relationship with the Net. Because *habitus* is built on past experiences, each new event builds up on past experiences as well as modifies the *habitus* itself. The longer, more complex and sophisticated a newsroom's relationship with the Net has become, the more used journalists are to its characteristics, the more they accept new practices, the more they will feel at ease with them, and internalise the Net as theirs. In a nutshell, as a new *habitus* is being shaped based on old values but with the addition of new practices, rules and interactions; an acceptance of the more of the characteristics of the Net, such as multimediality and interactivity or an increased immediacy of access at the expense of analysis; is slowly being established. A brand new set of online journalism values is being put together, values that will be recognised as crucial by members of the field – still dominated by the print newsroom – in due course; these values will then merit the performance of online journalists or discredit it. This process of implementation is difficult and time consuming, often described by journalists themselves as a process of “trial and error”, as happens to those venturing into unexplored territories.²⁴⁸

It is relevant to analyse print journalist's attitude to this process, as they also have their say when it comes to capital or recognition benefits within the professional field. As Møller-Hartley (2011b, 2013) has found to be the case in Denmark, journalists in online media, need their practices to generate capital, in order to perform the 'field game'. This supposes that products, techniques, procedures which are inherent to online media need to be accepted by the whole field. Sonia Aparicio, at *El Mundo*, when claiming that her

²⁴⁷ Vallés complains about “journalism with burka” at *Diario de Mallorca*; Sanz and Casado (*Efe*) and Garcés (*Diario de Mallorca*) regret having to check so many sources.

²⁴⁸ Lafuente (*El País*), Romero (*Efe*) or Mas and Rodríguez (*El Mundo*) claim that they learn with the “trial and error” method. Romero describes his role as if he was a carpenter, whose tools are hanging on a wall. The new tools are engines such as *Google*, but the learning process is much older.

department has found how to produce popular online features, stresses that the new product – and its associated process – is compatible in journalistic terms with their professional core values; Baeta, her editor states, with a sense of relief, that they are now accepted by their print colleagues, an acceptance conquered after a long battle. Translated into field language, we should read that their practices are now creating cultural as well as social capital in the context of the newsroom.

iv. REVISITING VALUES

My research has found that online journalists, especially the ones who are more familiarised with the digital platforms, declare their commitment to walking along the narrow path drawn between their traditional tenets and the new features, negotiating the innovations that are compatible with both practices. From this investigation it can be claimed that journalists at first glance have mostly reacted to the Net by looking inwards, by returning to their roots, by declaring “[t]his is our job, being journalists, this is what we know” (Fernando Mas, *El Mundo*). They have found themselves confronted with their traditional values, their professional ideology (Hanitzsch, 2007; Deuze, 2005b), whenever they have attempted to find a model that, while preserving their social function, may be compatible with these online media.

But things must be nuanced: in order to make their *habitus* compatible with the Net, they have had to revisit their accepted journalistic values to separate what is really key for the profession to be maintained, from what was a technical need associated with the older platforms – usually the print press–, something that could eventually be disposed of. For instance, the relatively long life of exclusive news related more to the fact that print press was published every 24 hours than to the nature of the news; multimedia did not exist just because it was technically impossible; dialogue with audiences was not liked, but it was also operationally unachievable and unmanageable. As seen elsewhere in this thesis, journalists at *El Mundo* and *El País* do not reject multimedia anymore. They have revisited their professional values and now accept that their messages might run on different platforms. They now believe that the new online logic (fast, simple, less analytical, more stories with less content) might be valid, although they are different from what they were used to.²⁴⁹ Lafuente, at *El País*, reclaim for journalists the new role

²⁴⁹ See Baeta talking about how to reach audiences: “it is not true that they read less than before, they do

of prescribers, a figure that is valid as far as it is believed and followed by audiences. The most advanced newsrooms in this research do not question characteristics inherent to the Net such as its anonymity, features that other journalists at newsrooms such as *Diario de Mallorca* still oppose. Multimedia features, chats or breaking-news at *El Mundo* are eventually recognised by their colleagues as useful journalistic genres.²⁵⁰

Their journalistic ideology has indeed been revisited. This seems to be mainly a self-defense strategy, conducted in order to prevent the more radical consequence of following new non-professional entrants in their field in their loose approach.

“If we are to change, let the next generation do it, not us”. These were words by the deputy editor at *El Mundo*, Fernando Mas, on being asked about their attitude to their non journalistic online competitors. In blatant contradiction with this assertion, and with an eye on their market performance, they have led the transition from a very traditional newspaper, that initially just happened to be uploaded also online, to the content they are currently producing, which is miles away from their initial idea of online journalism. Evidence that the traditional conflict between broadsheet and tabloid journalism is being reproduced online has been found within the investigation of the present research, some new factors being identified as catalysts. Online media need audience to survive and it seems that prototypically tabloid stories work very well online and contribute to soaring readership numbers. This implies that journalists struggle when it comes to critically defending their traditional stance against tabloid journalistic approaches, whilst maintaining or ideally increasing the audience. Strategies such as this one are being denied; the justification for these stories is being sought elsewhere in the hopes of keeping their values apparently immaculate. At this point conflicts arise that are commonplace for online journalists when dealing with the Net – conflicts such as the role of the rest of the professional field, the colleagues that produce capital, the problem of reaching audiences and the validity of their rooted professional values.²⁵¹

v. FIELD

Fifteen years have passed since the arrival of the Net, and the four teams that have it in a different way”.

²⁵⁰ See the specific study about breaking-news on Denmark, by Møller-Hartley (2011).

²⁵¹ Evidences: Echeverría, at *El País*, looking for stories that were published on *El Mundo*, but rejecting them at the same time; *Efe* rushing to cover meaningless stories but saying that they do not like them, and *El Mundo* stressing that they just offer few stories of this type.

articulated this field research are still struggling to find a satisfactory compromise between their professional identity and the new challenges posed by online journalism. This process is taking place under the pressure and surveillance of the group – the field where online media belong – where print journalists are still a majority. Such a struggle is taking place mostly on the boundaries of their profession with other social groups' online activities: intruders, amateurs, and newcomers alike; not to mention bloggers, social networks, public relations organisations and newsmakers. The boundaries between these social groups are *loci* where professionals focus their efforts to control their territory and functions and prevent new entrants from taking over.²⁵² It is important to stress the fact that journalists that have migrated to other areas alien to the journalistic field and have subsequently ceased to behave according to their former *habitus*, are treated as enemies by their former colleagues – as was the case with the managers at *Efe*. All journalists interviewed during my research agreed unanimously that citizen journalism does not exist, fixing a clear enemy when policing their profession's boundary. That seems to point at the conclusion that the boundary of the jurisdiction of the journalist with other online activities is under question, a disputed territory. The struggle will last as much as the imagined journey to a new scenario. Meanwhile, all players involved are reaffirming their social role against other players, a fact made evident on numerous occasions in this research.

The *habitus* of journalists evolves much faster when they, as a profession, risk being ignored or being under the threat of being ignored and replaced. When the capital at stake in the field diminishes the flexibility towards changes increases. The print crisis translates into less security. It means that there is less economic capital in the field and also that the neighbour economy field gets more powerful, pushing towards a more flexible approach to online journalism. At the very beginning, ignored by audiences, journalists at *El Mundo* remember lacking esteem in their own newsroom. Not anymore. Now the situation is the opposite, at least at *El Mundo*, where the print paper is in trouble while the online edition is at least hugely popular. For their part, reporters at the print *Diario de Mallorca*, still dominant in its regional environment, do not feel the pressure to negotiate their rather obsolete vision. At *El País*, a medium confronted with huge and unexpected risks, their resistance has been weakened to an unseen and

²⁵² The boundaries of a profession are usually a very delicate matter for professional groups, to avoid unpleasant invaders (Robinson, 2010; Gieryn, 1983)

unimaginable level.²⁵³

It is particularly interesting how young journalists – for instance, Sergio Rodríguez, who never worked for a print paper – adhere to those basic journalistic values as if they thought that from those foundations not only a print media logic may be developed, but also an online one; as if the central components of the traditional journalistic ideology could be the solid root for the new platform. Of course, if they positioned themselves against the professional *habitus*, they would not be counted as part of the journalistic field. The newly-arrived reporters differ from their more experienced colleagues in accepting more operational flexibility (Rodríguez, *El Mundo*; Manso, *Diario de Mallorca*; Seisdedos and Doncel, *El País*), an attitude rarely seen in older practitioners (Casado and Romero, at *Efe*, Armendáriz, Riera, Ruiz at *Diario de Mallorca*).

No journalist in my study, including those who are at the beginning of the professional ladder, or those who do not yet occupy a high position, or even those who work for an organisation that is in a weak position; leaves aside his or her verbal commitment to their group values – professional *habitus* entirely. Neither the prediction about their rather dark future; nor the urgent need for some media companies to improve their revenues; nor the wave of staff redundancies, even, deters them from defending the core of their traditional ideology.

Underneath what I found to be common traits of this process of adoption process are disparate personal attitudes, linked to the relative position of each individual journalist, to their personal background or their very particular expectations within the field, which in turn relate to the degree to which a crisis in the profession affects them. Both at an individual and an institutional level, the closer they feel to the centre of their field, the stronger they are in their traditional positions, the more rigid toward innovation. They stick strictly to their traditional *habitus* – even on matters such as formats, hyperlinking, or multimediality, and to demands relating to the immediacy of information on the Net²⁵⁴ – to what they are familiar with. On the other hand, journalists occupying more marginal positions, tend to be more open to new behaviours, though not even in the worst scenario do they put aside their *habitus*.

²⁵³ See the contrast between the attitude at *Efe*, where jobs are secured for life due to the nature of the Spanish public sector and *El País*, where the ax on jobs was pending at the moment of this investigation.

²⁵⁴ How often the front page should be reformulated: there are those who say that readers have to learn that things are as they present them. (Gualdoni, *El País*, in Chapter VI)

This is the case of *EfeTV*, the international offices at *Efe* and the online team at *El Mundo*, all of them accustomed to a less central location in the field, that of the underdog almost.²⁵⁵ This is consistent with Bourdieu's theory: the less ingrained the traditional status, the more open to changes. *El Mundo* have been able to accommodate online multimediality as one of their values; whereas *El País* have rushed to adopt their competitor's strategy but still are doubting the strategy itself— should online news media educate readers or give them what they want? (Gualdoni, *El País*). At *El Mundo*, and to a lesser extent at *El País*, new genres, new logics being created from and over old values, consistent with their deep-rooted ideas, are emerging and being incorporated into a new *habitus*.

This research has also found that claims are more consistent with a formal adherence to tenets and values the journalists hold dear, than to their real practices. In their actions the journalists I spoke to and spent time with were often more engaged with new media technologies and 'compromised' more in their ability to adhere to the journalistic principles they regard as ideal, than their own accounts suggested. They are more rigorous when it comes to defining their values than putting them into practice, although they virtually always claim loyalty to their values.

3. JOURNALISTIC TRANSFORMATIONS

Alongside this investigation, a number of relevant findings point out to changes in how journalism could be performed in the future. For instance, the notion of the exclusive news, the scoop, is now under threat from the immediacy of online news. The online feature that used to fit better with journalism and speed may well end up doing away with the highly appreciated value of finding original and exclusive stories, due to the fact that they may be copied online in seconds. This phenomenon was seen in this research in very crude terms: scoops may have just seconds of life, a couple of minutes in an average case. Nevertheless, due to the extraordinary weight that the traditional journalistic *habitus* gives to the cultural capital associated with it – which is, by the way, in deep contradiction with its lifespan – professionals still rush to publish information that, in reality, is of insignificant real value. Lascurain at *Efe*, Martín at *El Mundo* or

²⁵⁵ Cerame (*EfeTV*) defends flexibility, but inside journalism; Novoa and Aparicio (*El Mundo*) say that they are exploring new features, but strictly under the journalistic umbrella.

Doncel at *El País* reckon that perhaps this traditionally well-rooted practice deserves some reflection, as it seems to be losing its meaning since the appearance of the Net.

Immediacy seems to be also behind most new situations on the side of the newsmakers, as Phillips described (2010) in the United Kingdom. In this research I found three new behaviours related with this online feature: the overwhelming power that influential actors – from the political and financial fields – may exert on online media at the time of the publication of some original reporting²⁵⁶. Second, on the opposite side, due to the particular and widespread reach of the Net, a non original story probably will get published even by media that would not like to inform about it – not only Vallés talks about an “imposed freedom” but at *El País* they publish reluctantly a report about a politician's journey to Equatorial Guinea to avoid damaging their public image. Third and last, immediacy stresses the pressure on those media which are reference for others, as sources care about the first impact on the public sphere – seen at every visited newsroom.

From the side of new journalistic genres, a matter that only a handful of scholars have been exploring²⁵⁷, I found that at *El Mundo* are taking root. It is the case of breaking-news – Martín, Más and Baeta claim that this is their more powerful tool to grip the audience²⁵⁸, live chats – previously described by Moreno (2007, p. 142) or Matheson (2004) – and, especially, the multimedia feature, now fully developed and very successfully. In terms of the audience, these genres are practices recognised in the journalistic field.

In this investigation I found a profound reconfiguration of the workspace of the newsroom, which is in turn the result of a new technology which is altering workflow patterns, the external interaction with sources and readers, as well as the internal hierarchies of power. Inside the newsroom, journalists are still redefining their new space – my research is full of evidence in this respect – but those more acquainted with the new landscape are building new media logics, new relationships either in the physical or the virtual space, filtering them through their traditional conception of journalism (Robinson, 2011) – evidences in the dialogue from the *El Mundo's* newsroom with London and Badajoz, or with Moscow and Seville at *El País*. Further

²⁵⁶ See the telephone call from the Government to *El País*, asking to delete some online stories.

²⁵⁷ Steen Steensen is one of them, focused on the feature reportage online (2011).

²⁵⁸ The reason for most readers to access news sites as studied by Nguyen (2010).

studies might be needed to get a full picture of this reconfigured space that will be clearly much more flexible than before.

4. EXPORTABLE PATTERNS

In spite of the already considerable number of studies on the relationship between the Internet and journalism, few patterns have been described for the whole of these processes or for other comparable situations where social groups, with a strong identity and a sense of self-esteem, have to adapt a new technology that threatens their role and clearly modifies the boundaries between them and other professions.²⁵⁹ This lack of generalisation is due to a number of causes, among them the fact that no adoption is identical to others; and is not the timetable, the external and internal pressures, nor the market and audiences. As is the case of this research, even at the same social environment, moment and market, each medium has its own specificity.

Nevertheless, from this study at four different newsrooms, and consistent with past analyses, a certain common approach to this new playing field can be claimed, one that begins by confronting the most superficial features of the Net, such as anonymity and authentication, followed by multimediality, then immediacy in a very superficial manner, then new languages related with genres and finally, although interlinked with immediacy, the new relationship with the audience. Accepting a journalistic model where audiences and professionals join efforts to create a sort of a dialogue seem still a reality very difficult for them to adhere to.

The journalists studied in this investigation show that their actions are still heavily influenced by a strong professional *habitus* that was shaped for generations, mostly while the print press was the preferred standard. And this happens at the same time as they are losing part of their former power and influence; while struggling with newcomers who are dismissive of journalism and often commercially successful; with the managerial decisions out of their reach; confronted with a technology that demands new routines, new relational logics, the creation of new spaces that shape new hierarchies and new languages. In this very complex scenario, they still consciously adhere to their history, and to their ideology of journalism. But these values are not

²⁵⁹ Boczkowski demands that from the already important academic knowledge accumulated about this cultural conflict some more general patterns should be extracted (2011).

taken as static, rigid and inflexible as they used, not only because there is a gap between tales of journalists and reality itself, but also because some of them, especially those who are closer to the new media logic, are more than willing to negotiate what is key and should be preserved and which of their embedded practices and beliefs may be interpreted in a different tune. Under the threat of being relegated to a marginal place in society, they seem ready to look for a revision of their *habitus*, at least parts of it, maintaining what they interpret as essential, even an asset, and reconfigure their values and practices. This evolution, given that online journalists belong to a bigger social group, requires some consent from the rest of the field. Without any recognition to the online pioneers, changes would be delayed. They expect that readers, once journalism embraces the Net with less restrictions, will eventually come back to them, trusting their role as mediators once again.²⁶⁰

No one in my research showed any hesitation about the – for them obvious – social need for a journalistic mediation; they guess being that they will serve readers perhaps validating online content, perhaps performing the role of opinion-shapers or prescribers, even guiding readers through the insurmountable amount of information that is available online. They may carry less weight in society, they might now share their function with other players, but they expect to be much needed. They are fully aware of what is happening around them, how other competing non-journalistic players behave, especially those linked to well-known technological corporations, and how successful most of them are. Despite this, they tend to congratulate themselves on being, in essence, the way they used to.²⁶¹ The group of journalists I studied would not dare to predict what their job will be in the future, their new position in the reshaped cultural production sector, but not one of them seems to hesitate what the right response is to these media transformations: better journalism, with a greater attachment to the central roots of their profession, to retelling events in an impartial and unbiased manner, disclosing hidden truths in a fair way, separating their own opinions from facts.

At first glance, all this could be described as nostalgia, a wistful desire to return to those

²⁶⁰ Deputy-editors and editor-in-chief at *Diario de Mallorca* and the multimedia-editor at *El Mundo* give this impression. The editor-in-chief's idea at *El País* of future journalists as opinion-shapers, somehow means that readers will come back to them.

²⁶¹ Fernando Mas, deputy-editor at *El Mundo* explains that their online journalistic success is based on doing what they knew, what they are used to do (journalism), that worked so well in the past. The technological-liaison at *El Mundo* says that “what we need is more journalism” (Sergio Rodríguez, at section 1, Chapter VII).

“golden years”; however, what I found was not a mere yearning for those lost years, but rather what could be described as a longing for a society in which they would be allowed to apply their traditional values to the digital medium, remaining inquisitive all the same. A sort of idealised situation in which they can filter, give meaning and prioritise what is valuable among the things on offer.

What is already at stake for journalism, now that the Internet has developed its potential much more visible, is whether or not democratic societies need journalists to mediate between the world and their people. In the past, all that was left without a mediator was utter darkness; there was either journalism or unawareness of the comings and goings of the affairs of the community. Nowadays, however, when the world in its entirety is at the tip of one's fingers – or a mouse and a keyboard, for that matter –, the mediator is expected to be offering real added value in order to be chosen amidst a flood of online information. Journalists investigated in this work bet on being more sentinels than sellers, more guardians than entertainers, defenders rather than just a presence online, with an identity, a mission, with values shaped along the decades.

But, as I saw in this research, journalists are not fully autonomous and they are blatantly aware of this fact. They work for commercial companies, sometimes part of huge corporations, intertwined within complex political and financial systems. So, at the end of the day, their intentions will be shaped by other, more powerful fields, more autonomous than theirs. But their confidence in their traditional values seems quite clear. What plays in their favour is that the public sphere is much more complex than before, the subtlety financial/corporate and political elites (capitalist forces) employ in managing their image has exponentially multiplied and the clear boundaries between commercial and public interest that existed in the past have been diluted, and the fact that journalists are used to managing information and presenting it to readers. If these social and cultural changes proceed as they did in the past, the new online proposition should be sedimenting sometime soon.

All in all, journalists are at the forefront of a cultural change, one where well-rooted traditions of the past collide with a technology that makes a new, more open culture possible. This change might have well taken place despite journalists themselves, who might not have specifically sought the such situation: they now find themselves in a cultural crossroads where some forces push towards adopting a new way of working,

one that gives a wider presence to the audience and employs a more participative language, accepting more players within their professional boundaries, opening their field to new entrants and being simpler and faster; pulling against this change is their tradition, their rooted conservative practices, their most cherished values shaped along the decades – confronting the power and defending the truth. This conflict has implied the quest for a sociological adaptation; such adaptation is still incomplete, still looking for a new logic and learning how to make these changes socially palatable. The present investigation has shown how audiences and professionals alike are discovering how this new media logic operates, and which new values or capital emerge from the new journalistic profession; one that will blossom in a reformed field, with an adapted *habitus*, probably within new and reduced professional boundaries.

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Appendix 1

Headlines at *Diario de Mallorca* and competitors in January/February 2010

These are the front page headlines at Majorca's print newspapers, during the weeks I studied the *Diario de Mallorca*'s newsroom. To check to what extent what they declared as their goal, offering a different product to their readers, this content analysis was done looking to the differences in the presentation and angle of stories. I have classified the headlines in three groups: a) those that were common to all newspapers (in light grey); b) those that were common, but that were presented from a different prism, with a different angle (in dark grey) and, c) those that were absolutely original (in black). Despite that they still have many stories in common with competitors, an effort to offer original content is seen.

	Diario de Mallorca	Ultima Hora	El Mundo	Balears
26/01/10	Melià, new president of Unió Mallorquina in a divided party Castaño, against decision about Cela's legacy Charges to Vicens in the Andratx case Unions, against local savings bank merger The Camp Redo killer, to prison	Melià, new Unió Mallorquina's president Antich opens a new school in Santa Maria Fifth judicial action against Vicens 8,9 less olive oil sales in 2009 The Camp Redo killer, to prison	Munar's puppet losses UM leader contest Vicens, charged for planning decisions in Andratx Pastor, possible third candidate in PP's contest	Melià, new UM president Vicens, charged in Andratx's case Palma approves investment for Bellavista The killer, to prison
27/01/10	Madrid and the Balearics on top of new mortgages Munarists accept Melià as new president Killer's defence try to prove a mental illness Air Quantum ceases operations Nadal losses and suffers a knee injury	Fines for tax evasion, trebled in 2009 Government admits police miscoordination The president of hoteliers will not present to reelection A sij marriage in Palma Nadal gives up in Australia	A top politician says his signature was falsified The Government gives money to an IT company to sell food Nadal bows the knees in Australia	Bloc requires UM's counsellors to resign A suspect in Maquillaje case tells about a signature falsification Govern accepts no coordination in Police bodies Nadal switch on alarms
28/01/10	UM offers support to the Mayor in case of crisis A three times married man, in court An estate house, raffled with oficial guarantee Hiper Rent-a-Car, near bankruptcy Uncertainty about Nadal's future	End to some children's benefits Plan to create a new pedestrian zone in Palma Delgado proposes a telephone poll to choose candidates New fire station, ready next spring A wall falls down and cuts the motorway	Government pays to sell ensaimadas New evictions in Palma Munar gave free plots to friends Ibiza's Government pay to sell cakes	A new pedestrian zone, announced Ring motorway, closed for 15 days Nadal's injury not linked to the previous one
29/01/10	The retiring age rises to 67 years to save system Fees for returning students will be more expensive President sees the end to the crisis but his minister says the opposite Munar's husband explains to the judge his assets 12.000 waiting for a surgical operation	Retiring age rises to 67 years Matas' house reform, whitout planning permission Order to capture a man who tried to kill partner Melià: I expect our party to accept a ethic code Mallorca, out of the championship	Zapatero changes and announce retiring age at 67 Munar's husband leaves courts free The attorney 'forgets' to question Munar's husband Former President demands nulity of his case	Retiring age, at 67 Majorca, out of copa for just a goal Munar's husband explains their assets Melià wants his party to be more nationalist Nadal is now the world's number four

30/01/10	500.000 balearics will work longer 1.200 support Nadal in UM Balearic islands, on top of jobless rise Police seize documents at the TV station A school bus leaves 28 children at the wrong village	The Balearics, on top of destroying jobs Nadal gets the support of 2000 people 1.300 students in a demonstration for peace Wide opposition to new retirement age Nadal, at least one month out of tennis courts	"Vicens favoured Garau in Andratx" Pollença, first municipality to oppose digital tax Police seize information at Munar's TV station	Radical opposition to Zapatero's measures Local PP presidents give support to Bauzá Nadal says "I wont give up" Police at Mallorca TV station
31/01/10	A 3 degree earthquake causes panic PSOE gives support to new retirement age Black market's workers, double Families of Civil War soldiers, in favour of cenotaph	A 3.2 degrees earthquake awakes Palma's bay New UH website opens tomorrow Former stadium, derelict	Government's websites, not in Spanish Palma's fault causes no damages PSOE accepts leader's retiring plan	Earthquake at Palma's bay New major at Campanet Balearic libraries, the least used 12 hours of music for Haiti
01/02/10	The Balearics have fewer religion students than in Spain Very little sismic risk in Majorca Mallorca loses against Xerez Federer beats Murray in Australia	Hoteliers want 70.000 less beds in sector Mallorca fails in Jerez End of earthquake alert in Majorca Barcelona has a majorcan party Fifth cycle party in Palma	90.000 Balearics work in the black market The worst match (photo) Emaya asks Cort* for 15 million to leave headquarters	Disaster in front of worst league team More Balearic dependent on games End of earthquake alert Police and antisystem groups prepare Majorca summit
02/02/10	Judge thinks Matas could have earned money with Palma Arena overcost No local council has an seismic emergency plan No francoist herald at the war monument Spanish soldier killed in Afganistan Storms and snow at the majorcan mountains	Palma saves the cenotaph but cleaned of francoist signs Magistrates see reasons to investigate Matas Dies at 66 Doctor Antonio Montis Alemany tells Antich that Mallorca will be in bankrupcy Russian mafia's chief, free and back in Calvià	"The Palma Arena overcost was a Matas decision" UM local counsellors want Nadal out of party Calvo saves Faixina cenotaph	Francoist cenotaph will not be knocked down Magistrates consider Matas' investigation "unavoidable" Bloc asks for more cinemas in Catalan by law No winner for raffle
03/02/10	Sa Nostra looks for a merger with Asturias, Murcia, Galicia and Cantabria banks A luxury yacht, burnt while in Palma docks Nadal says Grimalt is a Vicensman Less unemployment in Majorca in January	Nadal and Flaquer confront in front of magistrates A luxury yacht, burned in Palma The Balearics, only places with less jobless in january Petrov twice a day gos to Police Station A majorcan and Pe, candidates for Oscar	The unsustainable Spain Nadal points to Munar as responsible of 3 millions deviation Consell throws away 350 beds in good condition Magistrates order to investigate Matas' investment fund	Confrontation between Nadal and Grimalt before magistrates Jobless, 500 less in january in Majorca Six people injured at Palma harbour
04/02/10	A government high official and four more, arrested for corruption The Mallorca's bankrupcy, delayed three months Sa Nostra tells employees that they are looking for another merger 600 euro fines for non-checked buildings EX-Muro mayor, punished with ten years out of politics	A UM high official, arrested for corruption Mallorca accepts that it goes to bankrupcy A couple, with life threatening injuries in a car crash in Sa Cabaneta The best cycling race, in Majorca Bauzá looks for an agreement to lead PP	Attorney opens up the first corruption case in Antich's government Najera will be enabled to change uses of land in Playa de Palma Mallorca avoids bankrupcy for 4 months	Inestur's director and four more arrested Police searched the public company for more than 12 hours A group announces actions against the cenotaph
05/02/10	Antich, ready to break with UM after another 4 members of government arrested Arrested members of 6 narcos gangs in Majorca Two dead in accidents at Manacor and Campos Stock exchanges drops 5.94 % Six professions that demand workers	Antich will take radical action against UM after 8 new members arrested A big illegal drugs 'factory' found in Cala Egos Pons sold Varela a house and then signed a longer contract at Mallorca Two dead in car crash at Campos and Manacor Alemany calms down players	Inestur's corrupt members diverted money to UM officials Another fan of Munar, arrested	Antich will take radical action in Government against UM Magistrates investigate 25 people and 23 companies Pessimism takes stocks 5.94% lower PP is 3.8 points ahead in CIS poll
06/02/10	Antich, Armengol and Calvo break with UM and they will have minority governments Nadal and Flaquer, arrested Comment: Governing without UM, a late but necessary decision	Black day for UM Zapatero proposes a weak labour reform Delgado proposes a telephone poll to choose candidates New fire station, ready next spring A wall falls down and cuts the motorway	Crisis in the government pact, but Munar is still untouchable "We want to see Antich because his project is a failure"	PSOE ejects UM from Government and Police arrest Nadal and Flaquer Five families, evicted from their flats at Olmos

07/02/10	Nadal and Flaquer, free on a 100.000 euro bail	Man arrested in Voltor case free on bail	Flaquer accepts that he asked an special treatment in a public tender	Everyone free on bail, with charges
	A man dead from using a power saw	Barceló, new Tourism minister and Bloc will be in charge of Environment in Govern and Consell	"The Heir" at cops car (photo)	Barceló, new Turism minister and Aguiló at Work and Training
	The expensive journey of food from farms to kitchens	Antich could be in charge of Sports	A man dead with a power saw	Sansó leaves seat
	A private association advocates marijuana in Alaró			
08/02/10	Barceló to Tourism and Aguiló new Employment minister			
	Flaquer and Nadal's crimes would be punished with 11 years of prison	A 10 mark for Mallorca	Closure for Inestur and announcement of economic audits	Solutions on the playing field
	Nadal: "What has happened? Is everybody gone?"	Antich do not expect a vote against him	Magistrates say that UM took and diverted money without control	Antich does not fear a non-confidence vote
	Antich announces closure of 30 public companies	Man who robbed flats as if he were spiderman arrested	Peppers' ass adds for Mallorca have 3500 fans on Twitter	Sharp reduction of public officials and departments
09/02/10		Success at Marrabxi's Carnival		Anger at UM for being evicted from Government
	PP rules out a non confidence vote	UM, critical of Antich, will wait until PP decide what to do in future	Inestur's money went to a foundation linked to Nadal	Antich invites opposition to present a non confidence vote
	A former high magistrate, charged in Palma Arena's case	Defendants, against bails in Voltor case	How long will his sixth government be? (photo)	Nadal will not leave seat and will fight against Mayor
	Closure for an illegal games shop	Rejected De Santos denounce	Antich announced law to stop public companies' corruption	An old school, derelict
10/02/10	De Santos' sentence, to be reviewed (photo)	Old Son Espanyolet school, derelict	Riskal unexpectedly shuts down	Altered contracts in Voltor case found
	Riskal shuts down when one year old			
	Bauzá bounces back and now accepts a confidence vote and polls	Bauzá wants a non confidence vote and advanced polls	UM used a rake valuation to pay their men of straw	PP prepares a non confidence vote and polls
	UM, against the Government (photo)	A car crashes into a chemist's	UM votes in Parliament against Government	Zapatero, to extend 420 euro benefit for jobless six more months
11/02/10	Barceló exhibits 25 years of work at CaixaForum	Nadal and Flaquer avoid prison by posting bails	Banks must reduce 20% real estate values on books	Closure order for a sex house in Campos
	The 420 euro benefit for 6684 jobless balearics, ends	Today magistrates will say if there are links between Matas and Palma Arena		Cami dels Reis will run under ground
		Fuster replaces Reus at Gesa		
12/02/10	Cerdó defies mayor and rejects leaving Emya's presidency	Found in La Rapita parts of missing woman's body	Attorney unveils a document that proves corruption in 'Palma Arena'	PP and UM made Antich explain his politics at Parliament
	Balearic residents: 2.2 weekly hours for sex	Opposition approves Antich must explaining political crisis	The Government gives money to an IT company to sell food	Cañellas faces magistrates
	5 arrests due to the killing of a missing woman whose body appeared in Campos	Hidalgo and Cañellas give opposite accounts of Sant Elm case	The most corrupt party's leader teaches ethics to children (photo)	A woman's body found in La Rapita
	Cañellas faces judges again	Horrach, near the heaven (photo)	5% of students, enough to call a strike at secondary schools	Future autonomic politicians (photo)
12/02/10	Risk of snow today at sea level	The area for short haul flights in use	5 arrested in relation to the body found in Campos	
	Matas' tv sets were payed for with 500 euros notes	PP prepares a non-confidence vote at Palma local council	A 271.000 euros present for Munar	Corredor congratulates Antich and attacks the arrested politicians
	Cort* demands 50% of films in catalan by law	Maria Elena's killer confesses his crime	The suspected killer finds parts of Maria Elena's body	Blanco reduceix 15% flying taxes
	A year in prison for attacking a GP assistant at hospital	Pons will not give back the million that was got from Grande	Cort asks Government to adopt Catalan cinema's regulation	Pons denies responsibility for Mallorca's debts

Contents already known, presented from a standard point of view, usually taken from news agencies or other PR sources.

Contents known, presented from a different perspective, more balanced, with local interests and priorities.

Original stories, not previously known, and not available in other media. What is usually called "an exclusive" or a "scoop".

* Cort is the accepted name for the Palma local council, following the name of the square where it is located.

Appendix 2

Detailed description of the field work

The field work was developed during two separate periods: in January and February 2010, at the *Diario de Mallorca's* newsroom, and in January and February 2011, at *El Mundo*, *Efe* and *El País* headquarters, in Madrid.

These are the details.

(a) ***Diario de Mallorca*** was my pilot field work; it was my first experience of this kind.

Interviews. Seven.

(One interview took place in the days after my time at the newsroom.)

My interviewees were:

The editor-in-chief, Pedro Pablo Alonso

Two deputy-editors, Joan Riera and Antonio Ruiz

A deputy editor (that is the leading commentator), Matías Vallés

A section-editor, Pilar Garcés

Two reporters, one young, Miguel Manso, and one senior, Felipe Armendáriz.

Content analysis:

I did an additional content analysis exercise with *Diario de Mallorca*, comparing the print edition with other regional press during a month (available in Appendix 1)

*Direct observation*²⁶².

Two weeks.

*Participant observation*²⁶³.

Two sessions, one with the deputy-editor and a second with Culture and Society.

²⁶² By “direct observation” I mean the time I have spent at the newsroom.

²⁶³ By “participant observation” I refer to the time I have spent mingled with a team, sharing their daily work.

(b) ***El Mundo***. I spent the last week of January 2011 at the *El Mundo* and *elmundo.es* newsroom in Madrid.

Interviews. Eight.

My interviewees were:

The editor-in-chief, (with whom I had a formal interview and some more informal meetings), Fernando Baeta

The deputy-editor, Fernando Mas

Three breaking-news editors, José Luis Martín, Olalla Novoa and Yaiza Perera

The multimedia-editor, Sonia Aparicio

The technology reporter, also liaison officer with the technological department, Sergio Rodríguez

Direct observation

One week

Participant observation.

Two sessions, one at the breaking-news department and another at the multimedia/features section

(c) ***Efe***. I spent the first week of February 2011, again in Madrid, at *Efe*'s newsroom. I had had a very useful previous interview with the National News editor, Javier Tovar, who introduced me to their structure, principles and working philosophy. Then, I spent time observing the coordination table, the Society and Future section and the Madrid local news area.

Interviews. Nine.

Interviewees:

The National news editor, Javier Tovar

The TV editor-in-chief, Marta Cerase

The TV deputy editor, Lourdes Alvarez

The editors of Society and Culture, Raúl Casado, and Madrid sections, Jesús García Becerril

The deputy editor for National news, Luis Sanz

The chief coordinator of the agency, Javier Lascurain

The news-checker editor, Juan Ramón Romero

The reporter in charge of science, Amaya Quincoces

I was in contact with a range of other reporters and editors on a daily basis, as I had informal lunches with some reporters with whom I could criss-cross some details.

Direct observation

One week

Participant observation:

Society and Future section

Madrid

Main coordination table

(d) *El País*. I spent the second week of February 2011 at *El País*' newsroom, in Madrid. I had been in touch previously with them and I was allowed to spend a week doing interviews and observing their work.

Interviews. Seven, plus two more less structured interviews and a number of contacts.

Interviewees²⁶⁴:

The editor-in-chief, Gumersindo Lafuente

The editor of Society, Berna González Harbour

The editor of International, Fernando Gualdoni

The editor of National news, Javier Casqueiro

The Culture deputy-editor, Iker Seisdedos

A reporter from Economy, Luis Doncel

The coordinator for breaking-news, Borja Echeverría.

Direct observation

One week

Participant observation:

One session at the breaking-news table.

²⁶⁴ At *El País* I felt that my work could fail: due to the internal situation, I perceived that some members of the team described quite an unrealistic situation, where journalists were depicted as people able to work without limitation. It took me many interviews to break the barrier and get more of a sincere and open vision: some of them were afraid of being redundant, and then they were reluctant to criticise even the most awkward of situations. But in the end, I was able to get another angle.